

# FORTEGNELSE

over de af

KOMMISSIONEN FOR

LEDELSEN AF DE GEOLOGISKE OG GEOGRAFISKE

UNDERSØGELSER I GRØNLAND

udgivne

## MEDDELELSER OM GRØNLAND

udkommer som Regel 1 Gang aarlig og faas

portofrit tilsendt ved Henvendelse til Hovedkommissionæren

C. A. Reitzels Boghandel,

Løvstræde 7,

København K.

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BIND LVII

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MED 10 TAVLER



KØBENHAVN  
I KOMMISSION HOS C. A. REITZEL  
BIANCO LUNOS BOGTRYKKERI

1918

PRIS: 7 KR.





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The view from Kagsiarsuk (Brattahlid) across Tunugdliarfik (Eriesfiord)  
to Igdlertigssalik (Búrfell).  
(From a coloured sketch and photograph.)

# THE ICELANDIC COLONIZATION OF GREENLAND

AND THE FINDING OF VINELAND

BY

DANIEL BRUUN

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WITH A PREFACE BY *FINNUR JÓNSSON*



KØBENHAVN

BIANCO LUNOS BOGTRYKKERI

1918

TRANSLATED BY  
*DOROTHY BUCHWALDT*  
NÉE GODWIN



## PREFACE

ONE of the proudest achievements, which the ancient Icelanders collected, was the discovery and colonizing of a new country west of Iceland, a country bearing the enticing name of Greenland. Ari Frodi (d. 1148) fully understood the import of this fact since he consecrated a chapter to it, in his otherwise so brief "Book of Icelanders" (written about 1130). This event took place at the end of the 10th century. The discoverer, who established the colony, was the bold Eric the Red, being the son of a late emigrated Norwegian. Two territorial settlements, the eastern and the western (we should say the southern and the northern), were established, they flourished rapidly and existed for several hundred years, far into the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Fortunately we know — thanks to the Icelanders historical sense — very much about this isolated colony's history, culture, and the conditions of life altogether, being accurately informed about the colonized regions, and farms etc. Almost everything ancient concerning Greenland, was at sometime collected and published in "Grønlands historiske Mindesmarker" ("Greenland's historical memorial") I—III (1838—45) together with a Danish translation, which is also used in this book.

Only very little has been produced since then out of the sources concerning the history of the colony. But all the more has been brought to light of the colonist's mode of living through several investigations and excavations undertaken lately, in the farm-ruins found, covered with grass and earth, besides other investigations.

One of the chief men in these investigations was Captain DANIEL BRUUN. He has acquired thorough knowledge of the colony's whole history and conditions and has written this lively and explicit description of the Greenland colony with liberal quotations from the sources, amongst which Eric the Red's Saga is the most important and the most interesting.

It is also in this Saga that the account of the important discovery of America's east coast is to be found (including Labrador and southwards).

It is also included in the following work. This work, containing

numbers of excellent pictures, drawings and maps, can be highly recommended to all who wish good and reliable information concerning the ancient colony. All sources, both ancient and new, have here been thoroughly and intelligently made use of, likewise the rendering of the ancient text is completely reliable.

For the first time we here have a work, in which saga records are seen against the background of modern geographic and archæologic studies in Iceland and Greenland, which in a great measure are carried on by the author himself.

Copenhagen <sup>13</sup>/<sub>6</sub> 1917.

FINNUR JÓNSSON.

Professor of northern philology  
at the University in Copenhagen.

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THE ICELANDIC COLONIZATION  
OF GREENLAND  
AND THE FINDING OF VINELAND

BY

DANIEL BRUUN

1918







North cape, Iceland

(photo.)

## Chapter I.

### Eric the Red's Youth in Iceland.

**A** thousand years are a comparatively short time for the development of the human race, although an endless time, for the living generation to look back on.

For more than a thousand years ago when the people of Denmark and Sweden were collected each under their own king, and Norway was about to become a realm, *Iceland* was still uninhabited, whilst the *Faroe Islands* had been discovered by Irish hermits who here sought a refuge from the persecution of the Vikings. Very soon these hermits found their way to Iceland, settling down on the island of **PAPEY** and **SIDA**, a beautiful part of the country along the south and south east coast. Only a short time they were allowed to live here in peace as the Norsemen followed in their wake, partly driven from home on account of political circumstances. When King **HAROLD FAIRHAIR**, after the battle of *Hafsfjord* (near Stavanger) had assigned the whole of Norway, the freeborn, liberty loving Norwegian chiefs, accompanied by a few Swedes and Danes with their thralls, began to emigrate on their ships taking their domestic animals and valuables along with them.

Iceland became fully inhabited in the so-called "*Landnámsöldin*" (time of colonization) (874—930) as the *Faroe Islands* had been taken in possession by the Norwegians.

Further away lay *Greenland*, the existence of which the new inhabitants of Iceland surmised at once. It was a man named GUNN-BIÖRN who had discovered that there were some islands to the west of Iceland, the so called *Gunnbiörns-skerries* most probably on the east coast of Greenland about where the present trading-station *Angmags-salik* is.

As the longing for freedom had driven the Norsemen from their native country to the islands of Faroe and Iceland, thus was Greenland searched and discovered by the freeborn, courageous, indomitable, and quarrelsome man, *Eric the Red*, who as an outlaw, was obliged to find a refuge for three years.

He came to Iceland from Norway in his childhood with his father *Thorvald* ("son of Osvald, son of Ulf, son of Öxna-Thori") from whom he seems to have inherited his trait of character.

In the Saga of *Eric the Red* we read:

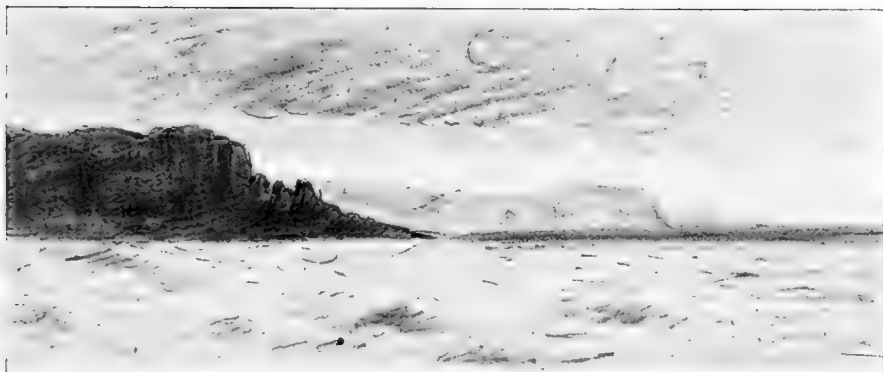
"*Thorvald* and his son, *Eric the Red* left *Jæderen* for Iceland on account of manslaughter; Iceland was then vastly inhabited. They first lived in *Drangar* on *Hornstrand's* (coasts of Horn, *Hornebeach*), *Thorvald* died there, *Eric* married *Thiodhild*, *Jörund's* and *Thorbiörg Knarrarbringa's* daughter who then was married to *Thorbiörn* from *Haukadal*.

*Eric* then proceeded northwards and lived at *Ericstad* by *Vatnshorn*».

*Jæderen* was one of the few places in Norway where agriculture, on account of the country's level surface, could be carried on to some extent.

If one goes southwards on an excursion from *Stavanger* or from any of the other Stations on the line on the way to *Egersound*, to *Jæderen*, one gets at once the impression that the country resembles certain parts of *Jutland* (in *Denmark*): big flat ranges alternating with undulating heights; here and there one finds steeper ranges which for the greater part consisted of pebbles. Heaths and downs are not wanting; but between these lay cultivated tracts, on which one sees farms and cultivated fields, showing that the earth's fertility was not inconsiderable. We discover, on our expedition through *Jæderen*, which coast is washed by the turbulent North Sea, and through which *Hafrsfjord* cuts, and memorable for the before mentioned naval battle, many places with reminiscences of the time of the Vikings, in form of stone monuments, still standing. Here we find sites of ancient farms which completely resemble those in *Iceland* and *Greenland*. In the graves of the Vikings is found rich property, showing, that these parts belonged to them, where culture long before the beginning of history had taken root. People of the stone age already had lived there and in the time of the Vikings *Jæderen* was a flourishing country.

*Eric the Red* was probably born here in the middle of the 10th century, and as his father had to leave the country on account of man-



1—2. Farmsteads (D. B. 1908). 3. The Hornstrands with the Drangarnir (D. B.). 4. Home to be milked (D. B.).  
5. The house Guard (D. B.).

Old-fashioned Icelandic life and buildings.

slaughter, Eric went with him. They steered for Iceland to find a refuge. But this island was already a generation past "fully inhabited" as is clearly related in the *Landnámabók* (accounts of the colonization of Iceland) and in other Saga. On that account it was no longer easy for a stranger to find a place, not too remote, where he could settle down under good conditions of livelihood. It was therefore not astonishing that Thorvald settled on the inhospitable *Hornstrands*, as here he could still annex land which up to now nobody had laid a claim to. Of this we find an account in *Landnámabók* (II, 31):

"Thorvald took possession of *Drangaland* and *Dranga-bay* up to *Enginess* and lived on Drangar the rest of his life".

The Hornstrands lie on the big, deeply branched peninsula, that Iceland has to the Northwest. The northeast branch, which ends in the high, steep headland, *Horn* or *North Cape*, is a high mountainous country, the interior of which is covered by a coat of ice the so-called *Dranga-Jökull* (*Glacier*), whose white dome lies as inland-ice behind the coast's mountainous edge. Below the glacier on the coast nearest the *Arctic Ocean* one sees one of the highest, and wildest mountains. It is called *Drangafjall* after *Drangarnir*, seven small mountain-peaks, whose pointed tops form a row of rocks projecting out into the sea, which accordingly has given name to mountain, glacier, and farm.

The sea is full of islands and rocks. The coast seen from the sea, seems wild and desolate, and it is excessively difficult to land here, even during the summer, but during the winter all navigation is often impossible on account of polar-ice, and even in the summer the ice can every now and then bar all access to the *Hornstrand's*. To this very day only few farms are to be found there, far apart, and mostly without any direct communication over land. Here it was that *Thorvald* settled, under circumstances very different from those he was used to at home in *Jæderen*. The place he chose lay to the Northwest of *Drangafjall* (mountain), and he called the farm *Drangar*. It was terribly lonely, and is still so. The climate was severe, the struggle for existence was at times very hard whether it took place on the sea or on land. It was only with difficulty, that one could obtain communication with the inhabited parts over the high and precipitous mountains. A mile towards the northwest was a little narrow fiord, *Biarnarfiord*, where a powerful Viking named *Hellu-Biörn* landed, with a ship completely shield-hung, on account of which he has since been called *Skjalda-Biörn*. He settled in *Skjalda-biarnarvik* a little further north, and the Saga relates, that he, his ship, and all his property lie buried on a tongue of land in *Biarnarfiord*. He was a worthy pioneer on that barren coast, for people like Thorvald and *Eric the Red*. From their farm, in the summer going westward, they could obtain communication with the farms at the head of *Icefiord*, but they had to go up over the high mountains, even pass the east end of *Dranga-Jökull* (glacier), which however in our days seems to have become less extensive.



1. Group of Dwelling houses (Jhs. Klein 1898). 2 and 3. A church built of earth turf (D. B. 1908).  
4. Front gables of a dwelling house (Jhs. Klein 1898).

Old-fashioned Icelandic life and buildings.

The farm Drangar was visited in 1914 by First Lieutenant (now Captain) H. STYRMER of the Generalstaff who was surveying on Hornstrands. He went (9 July) northwards from *Reykjarfjord* by motor-boat. After having rounded the most easterly corner of Drangarnir, where four big *Drangar* form the most easterly point of *Drangaháls* one reaches the farm, which lies on a little point, beyond which one finds several rocks, similar to the bay, between Drangarnir and *Geirolfsgnup*, to the northwest, which is filled with rocks. Immediately south of the farm the rocks rise to a. 300 m high and the top part (a. 100 m high) is very steep, on the southwest and west one finds a broad valley with a river running through it, and from the valley the ground rises towards the glacier, which cannot be seen from the farm. Towards the northwest *Geirolfsgnup* rises to a. 450 m.

The farm itself is, according to Icelandic conditions, a particularly large and excellent farm. A two story house built of concrete, was the dwelling of many persons, the widow two sons, one daughter, two old women, two men, two boys and one or two maidservants.

The farm had two to three acres of big well kept "Tun"<sup>1</sup>.

Hundreds of eider-duck live on the rocks round about. The stock is composed of five horses, three to four cows and numbers of sheep, giving a good income. A number of seals are caught, etc. The whole offers a prosperous and favourable impression.

Styrmer searched in vain for information concerning *Eric the Red*; the inhabitants could not point out any traces of old habitation. But there is no possibility of a doubt that this is the place where *Eric the Red's* father annexed land. His home has disappeared long ago; it may possibly be hidden under the present house. When the inhabitants wished to go southwards they had to follow a path up between the Drangar. Between *Drangar* and *Enginess* they passed through a country rich with grass, where there was a great deal of floating timber in the bay, besides many sea-bird's eggs on some of the islands. Seals were to be caught on the rocks and there was also fishing. Horses, sheep, goats and cows could find food on the mountains, the fields near the farm produced grass for the animals during the winter. It was often dangerous to pass through the mountains on account of the mountain-slides which happened just as often then, as now. The Icelandic authors EGGERT OLAFSSON and BIARNI PÁLSSON, who visited the farm in the 18th century, write of all the dangers they were exposed to during their ride over the mountains, where there were terrible squalls, and where they heard the mountain slides thunder as if canons had been fired and cover everything with dust. The inhabitants lived in fear of the slides coming down over them: but where should they escape to? Even the cattle and horses ran

<sup>1</sup> *Tún* means fenced homefields, or grassy tracts encircling each farm and fertilized by dung.





1. Stable for sheep with a round hay-barn (D. B. 1908). 2. Fireplace in a firehouse (D. B. 1908). 3. Front of a dwelling house (Johs. Klein 1895). 4. Interior of a dwelling house (badstofa) (Prof. Schiott, a. 1870). 5. Interior of a firehouse (eldhús) (Prof. Schiott a. 1870).

Old-fashioned Icelandic life and buildings.

about, wild with fear. A deep impression must be left on the character of one who spent his childhood and youth in such a place. Having to fight daily with nature to gain food for people and animals must steel one, whose work is connected with such a place, and we can hardly be mistaken when we assume that *Eric the Red* here developed those qualities which later on made him so fit for a Greenland expedition, where he met with circumstances of the same sort, as he, in his youth had so often defied and conquered, neither polar ice nor a colonist's life, even under difficult circumstances, could by no means frighten him. He was familiar with it all — besides, the conditions in Greenland were by no means worse, but in certain regards better than on Hornstrand.

We do not know how old Eric was, when his father died; he was probably still a young man, and he now married *Thiodhild*, whose mother *Thorbiörg* had married *Thorbiörn* from the *Haukadal* after her father *Jorund* (a son of *Ulf the squint eyed*) had died. *Thorbiörn* had a sister, *Jorun*, who was married to one of the celebrated family from *Laxárdal*, who is mentioned in the *Saga of the men of Laxárdal*. In this manner *Eric the Red* was related to one of Iceland's renowned races, and he knew how to keep abreast of his equals.

It is related — that Eric knew how to conduct himself under entirely different circumstances from those he was used to in daily life — in one of the *Saga*, not completely historical, relating to *Thorgils Örra-beinsfostri*, who in his youth lived in Norway under *Hacon*, who in the year 970 was made an earl, under *King Harold Bluetooth*, over northern Norway, shortly afterwards to become independent, and whose tragic life ended in the year 995. It is related:

“At that time there lived with Earl *Hacon* an Icelfander, *Eric the Red*, who later, was the first to found and inhabit Greenland. He was a young and courteous man, and a specially good friend of *Thorgils*”.

As Eric here is called an “Icelfander” one may suppose he must have left his home, at *Drangar*, to travel abroad. But he returned there — evidently only for a short while, to leave again for his wife's native land in *Haukadal*.

We do not know whether she disliked living in this remote *Drangar*, where existence could be trying enough; but it is very probable.

*Haukadal* lies in the *Dalecountry* (*Dala sýsla*) to the west of Iceland about 80 miles in a straight line to the south of *Drangar*. To travel over land must have been very difficult, especially when stores and moveable property had to be conveyed. We can in all probability assume, that *Eric the Red*, during the summer, when the weather was finest and the ice gone, let his sheep, cows and horses go over land whilst he and his property went by sea. He sailed northwards, round the northwest peninsular, past *North Cape* and all the fiords that intersect the north west of Iceland, until he had reached *Breidafjord* (*Broadbay*



1, 2, and 4. Outside walls with gables of houses (D. B. 1907-08). 3. A hay caravan (Jhs. Klein). 5. A frame for codfish-drying (D. B. 1907).

Old-fashioned Icelandic life and buildings.

or *Broadfiord*) thereafter he steered to the south east part of the fiord, as far as the mouth of the *Hvammsfiord* which is filled with rocks and islands, through which there runs a rapid current, which however a capable seaman ought to be able to manage. In *Hvammsfiord* there is a landing place, which is still used and where in the Saga age several commercial stalls were found, wherefrom the place has derived its name *Budardal*. There was not more than about an hour and a quarters ride from here to the place in *Haukadal* where, *Eric* and his bride were to settle.

When one rides from the head of *Hvammsfiord* into the *Haukadal* (valley), one passes fine farms and good fields, and it is a delightful sight on a summer day to gaze over the mountains which are not very high, and see the harvesters at work, since hay in Iceland is brought home to the farms on horseback, in big bundles one on each side of the horse. Or one sees the sheep grazing on the slopes of the valley under the charge of a boy whose cries one hears from afar. But far away over the vast expanse of mountains, the young cattle and lambs lead a free life until they are driven home in the autumn.

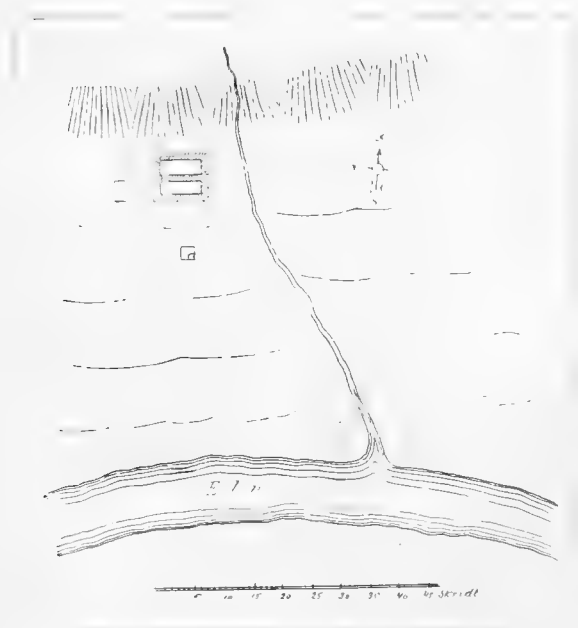
After an hour's ride or so one reaches a fresh water lake (*Vatn*) surrounded by meadows, where gnats swarm. Down by the lake lies a farm *Stora Vatnshorn* (*Big Vatnshorn*) and also a church. We are now in the district where *Eric the Red*'s mother-in-law lived with her second husband as it is told in "*Vatn*" (most likely *Stora Vatnshorn*). A little further along we reach the place where *Eric* "cleared the ground" and fixed his residence. He called his new farm *Ericsstad* after his own name; he generally liked later on, to name places, where he stayed in the same manner. On the slopes of the valley one sees the site of *Ericsstad* which has been dug out by the Icelander *Erlingsson*. Their position on the adjacent grounds to *Stora Vatnshorn* shows that *Thorbiörn* had given *Eric* the ground. His wife was now near her mother, and the conditions here compared to those at *Drangar* were less laborious and more attractive. It is doubtful whether *Eric* could put up with this quiet existence after being used to very much harder conditions. Meanwhile the site of the habitation shows how extremely frugal a freeborn man could live at that time in Iceland. To begin with, *Eric* had to be satisfied with a colonist's habitation, until he had the farm in order and the fields cleared, first then he could think of establishing a proper abode — but he had to leave before he had got so far.

The want of timber to a great extent was the cause why colonists in Iceland as a rule were obliged to build their houses, both in- and out-houses, with thick walls of earth and turf, the gables at the very most were made of timber or boards. The ruin at *Ericsstad* consists of two houses with united sidewalls, whose length on the inside is a. 14 m each with a corresponding breadth of a. 4½ m. There was an entrance to



(Jhs. Klein 1898).

The farm Stóra Vatnshorn (big Vatnshorn) in Haukadal, Iceland.  
Ericstad was lying on the point in the background.



(D. B. 1898).

Plan of Ericstad in Haukadal, Iceland.

one of the houses on the valley side. On entering one steps onto a flat stone threshold after which one stands on a hardbeaten clay floor in a lobby which is divided from the chiefroom, the living room by a wall of boards. Along the middle of the latter, so-called "*Langeldar*" (long fires) had been lighted. A kitchen fireplace was in the one corner, and all along one of the long walls was a platform or earthen bench either to sleep or sit on. There was no doubt of the compartment being a room, with an opening in the roof to let the smoke out and the light in. Behind this house lay another, the entrance to which was through the lobby. This was evidently a stock-house. A little isolated house, in which was a fireplace, lay in front of the entrance. There are only uncertain traces of other outhouses.

*Eric the Red* had now become a farmer in the valley of *Haukadal*; up to now he had lived far away from neighbours, but now they were near enough. It will not be astonishing that he, with his fiery, conflict-loving and arrogant mind, soon got into trouble with the inhabitants of the valley. More to the east, further up the valley to the south of the brook there lived a peasant called *Valthiof* on his farm *Valthiofsstad*. It is related in the *Landnamabók* that *Eric's* slave hurled a mountain slide over the farm, for which *Valthiof's* kinsman *Eyjolf Saur* killed the slaves near some slopes above the farm *Vatnshorn*. *Eric* was not long in taking revenge, he killed *Eyjolf* and slayed in addition the single combatant *Hrafn* on the farm *Leikskáli* (lying north of the brook opposite *Valthiofsstad*). The cause of the last manslaughter is not mentioned, but probably *Hrafn* stood on *Eyjolf's* side in the fight. Now the latter's, kinsmen, *Geirsteinn* and *Odd* belonging to the farm *Jörfi* near *Valthiofsstad* interfered and brought an action against *Eric the Red* for manslaughter. The consequence was that he was banished from *Haukadal*; it was a mild punishment, which according to the judgement of those times shows that *Eric* must be considered to have had some reason for his act; slaves are property, and the putting to death of them requires retribution, not that one reckoned a slave's life for anything special but because it was personal property.

Consequently *Eric* had to leave again. *Ericstad* was abandoned, and as we have already heard to be refound and dug out at the present time.

He did not go far this time — only as far as some islands amongst the rocks in the mouth of *Hvammfsfiord*.

In "*Landnama*" we read: "*Eric* was then banished from the *Haukadal* and therefore took the islands *Brokey* and *Örney* in possession; but lived in *Tödum* (or *Trödum*) on *Sudrey* during the first winter. He lent *Thorgest* (a peasant in *Breidabolstad* in *Snæfellsness*, *Snowfellsness*, opposite the islands) his *Setstokkar*<sup>1</sup>. Later on *Eric* moved to *Örney* and lived at *Ericstad*. He then demanded his "*Setstokkar*"

<sup>1</sup> means "benchstocks".





1. View southwards from Thingvallaborg.

(D. B. 1905)



2. View northwards.  
The Thingstead of Thorsness.

(D. B. 1905)

Thingvallaborg

Round the bay, Thingvallavógr (a) near the farm Thingvellir (b) stood booths.

back again but did not get them. After that Eric fetched them from *Breidabolstad* but *Thorgest* persued him. They fought near the farm *Drangar* (the neighbouring farm to *Breidabolstad*). Two of *Thorgest*'s sons were killed besides several other men. After that they both collected men, *Styr*, *Eyjolf* from *Sciney*, the Sons of *Thorbrand* from *Alptafiord* and *Thorbiörn Vifilsson* were on Eric's side, but the sons of *Thord the Geller*, *Thorgeir* of *Hitardal*, *Aslak* of *Langadal*, and *Illugi* his son, assisted *Thorgest*. Eric and his accomplices were pronounced outlaws at the assize of *Thorsness*. He equipped a ship in *Ericsvágr* (Eric's inlet) but *Eyjolf* hid him in *Dimunarvágur* (Dimun inlet) whilst *Thorgest* and his assistants searched him on the islands. *Thorbiörn*, *Eyjolf* and *Styr* accompanied him to sea past the islands. He told them that he intended searching that country which *Gunnbiörn*, son of *Ulf the Crow*, saw when the storm drove him westwards past Iceland, and he found *Gunnbiörns*-skerries. But he declared at the same time that should he find that country he would return to his friends".

The author visited the scene of the above named incidents in 1905 from *Stykkisholm* on the southside of *Breidafiord*.

In fine weather nothing can be more beautiful than the archipelago here, a complex of small islands between the mighty mountain ranges on *Snæfellsness* in the south, and *Skardstrand* in the north. As already mentioned, the entrance to *Hvammfiord* lies between the groups of islands.

Masses of sea birds breed on the holms and rocks and the eider-duck's nest, one finds everywhere. Not far from here, lie five or six bigger islands with small mountains and overgrown ravines side by side. *Brokey* is the biggest, and lies in the middle. In *Sudrey* there is the site of a little habitation surrounded by some cultivated ground. Here had been Eric the Red's dwelling *Tradir* which was his place of resort after his banishment from *Haukadal*. From here, one could see the farms *Breidabolstad* and *Drangar* on the southern coast of *Snæfellsness*, where Eric had fought. In *Öxney*, some very insignificant sites were shown as the farm *Ericstad*, where Eric had also lived. The place was well chosen, for not far from there a creek cut its way between the rocks, and it was in this so-called *Ericsvágr* (Eric's inlet) that the first equipment of the ship to Greenland took place. They told us that some broken down stone-walks that we saw had been, in Eric's time, either boat-houses or booths.

The conditions, in both places, where Eric had lived after his banishment from *Haukadal*, had evidently been very limited according to the size and accomodation of the houses — even more insignificant than *Ericstad* in *Haukadal*, but an energetic man could get food. There were birds and fish enough to be had, also grass for the sheep.

Not very far north of *Öxney* lies *Dimunarklakkar*, a beautiful island which is characterized, to an uncommonly high degree, by mighty



PLATE II

MIND, ON GROENL. LVII [DANIEL BRAUN]



Dimuns inlet and Dimunarklakkur on an island in Breidifjörður in Iceland.

(Daniel Braun phot., 1905)



Eric's inlet on Öxney in Breidifjord in Iceland.

(Daniel Bruun phot., 1905)



Basalt columns, standing tier upon tier — which is also the same case on several of the other islands — but not to such a degree. The two summits give the island an imposing appearance and they can be seen far and wide. The island lies rather out of the way, and a deep bay with a narrow inlet forces its way between the mountains. It was a good hiding place, and here it was also, that Eric's ship lay until the departure, whilst his pursuers searched for him in vain on all the islands. Tradition has turned the Saga's imperfect tales to account, with their report of the island having woods, the trees of which Eric felled to cover his ship so that it could not be discovered, but it is very doubtful as to the tradition being true. In any case no woods are to be seen now. But there is absolutely no doubt of the Greenland expedition having started from here.

In the neighbourhood of Stykkisholm lies the Thingstead of *Thorsness*, where Eric had been judged. Here one saw several sites of square booths, the walls of which were made of earth-turfs, and over which a tent-cloth was spread as long as the court sat, for here the assize people lived, ready to take part in all the transactions of law, that took place within a certain distance — as well as their listening to the pronouncing of the sentence of judgement from the slopes of the court. They passed the rest of the time in sport and games. The court was held either in the spring or the beginning of summer, and after Eric had been doomed as an outlaw for three years, at Thorsnes, he was obliged to disappear.

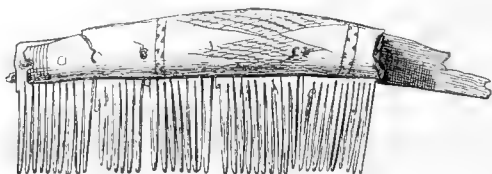
Whilst Eric the Red travelled in Haukadal and on the islands beyond Hvammsfiord, events took place which are excellently described in *Eyrbyggja-Saga*. At that time a mighty chief lived, *Snorri Godi* (chief and priest) on the farm *Helgafell*, built under a fine isolated mountain, south of Stykkisholm. He was the son of a grandson of *Thorolf* Moster beard, his contentions with another well-to-do peasant, and *Godi*, who lived in the neighbourhood, *Arnkel Thorolfsson* from *Bolstad*, give a graphical description of those times.

In these contentions, amongst which a wood was concerned, several peasants from Alptafiord, a fiord which forces its way into the country just east of Thorsness court, took part. The contest continued at the time *Eric the Red* was doomed an outlaw: and one can see, that he was very well acquainted with and connected to several of the combatants. Such was the case with *Thorbrand's sons* from *Alptafiord*, who had helped him in the quarrel at *Drangar*. After Eric had left on account of his outlawry, *Snorri* and the *Thorbrands-sons* killed *Arnkel* (a. 990): with that, the contest ended.

According to the custom, Eric the Red had — after being sentenced — a respite, so as to be able to reach his dwelling, before any one was allowed to kill him. In Iceland there was no executive power in the form of police, and they, who had sentenced a man, had to see to it themselves, that the sentence was fulfilled.

Eric was so shrewd a man, that he perfectly understood, that he would be sentenced and had probably begun in good time to equip his ship; now that the sentence had fallen he had to hide at once, so as to gain time, to be able to see to the last of the equipment. We do not know how he was able, during the clear nights, to delude his pursuers, but we know he succeeded. When everything was ready he set sail, starting his great voyage of discovery. His friends from *Haukadal* and the peasant from *Porkey* (Sviney) accompanied him part of the way, to Ellidaey — an island in Breidafjord, a little further west. Here Eric took leave of them, returning again three years later after a praiseworthy expedition of discovery.

"*Thorbiörn, Eyjolf* and *Styr* accompanied Eric past the islands, where they parted in great friendship, and Eric said, if he was able he would assist them in the same manner, should they ever require his help". (*The saga of Eric the Red*).







Seals on the floating ice.

(D. B. 1903)

## Chapter II.

### Greenland's first colonization.

Concerning the discovery of Greenland and the inhabitation of the country, the best possible transmissions exist from the olden times, which excluded all doubt as to how everything took place. *Ari Thorgilsson the Learned (Frodi)* writes about it in his book of Iceland (Chap. 6) the oldest Icelandic account. His informant was his father's brother, *Thorkel Gellisson*, whose informant again was a man who had accompanied Eric the Red over there. So it is the original communication we have before us.

It is written in Ari Frodi's book of Iceland: "That country called Greenland was discovered and populated from Iceland. *Eric the Red*, a man so named from the parts around Beidafjord, sailed forth from here, and took possession of the land there — whereafter it is named *Ericsfjord*. He named the country and called it *Greenland*, as he declared, it would entice people over if the country had a comely name. They found traces of human dwellings, to the east and west of the land besides fragments of small boats, and such implements of stone that one could gather that the same sort of people had lived there, as those who had populated Vineland, such as Greenlanders (i. e.: the Norsemen of Greenland) called *Skrællings* (Eskimoos). This event of Eric's beginning to populate the country happened 14 or 15 years before Christianity reached Iceland according to what was told *Thorkel Gellisson* by the man, who himself had accompanied Eric the Red to Greenland" (985 or 986).

*Landnámabók*<sup>1</sup> is another work where one can derive accounts of Greenland's eldest population, it is to be found in different manuscripts.

Finally accounts resembling these are to be found in the little Saga of Eric in the *Flateyjarbók* (book of Flatey) also in *Eric the Red's Saga*.

About Eric the Red's voyage of discovery is related as follows:

"Eric sailed from Snæfellsness, discovered the country (i. e.: east coast of Greenland) and came by sea to that place, which he named Midjökull (i. e. Middle glacier); it is now called Bláserkr (a place on the south east coast of Greenland). He travelled south along the country to investigate whether or not the land was inhabitable". (*Flateyjarbók*).

On this journey he evidently rounded Cape Farewell following the edge of the ice, and he now sought to land as soon as possible.

When one approaches Cape Farewell on the way to Greenland, one usually meets floating ice from the polar sea which drifts with the polar-stream along the east coast of Greenland, to continue round the south point of the country and part of the way up the west coast.

Often a damp fog announces the approach of ice, a few stray blocks come drifting with seals on them — ice-blocks continue to come, big and little, until one suddenly discovers that one is surrounded by the floating polar-ice, this powerful ice, the thickness of which is from 10—15 metres, comes from the arctic ocean, which during the winter has covered the surface of the sea, and perhaps floated about for years.

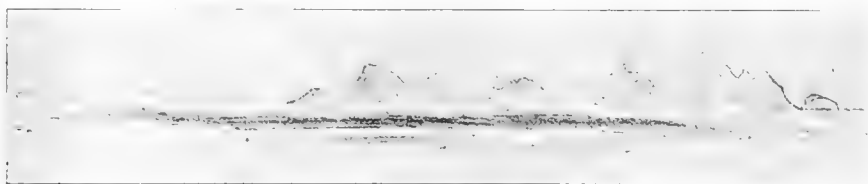
In the early spring when the polar ice is frozen hard up in the arctic ocean, there is not much "Polar-ice" to be seen on Greenland's southern coasts, these colossal ice-masses which have hemmed in the arctic ocean, begin their drifting when spring and summer set in. The waters between Spitsbergen and Greenland form a broad passage through which the ice river flows.

When the ice stream has passed through this territory the waters broaden out. The ice is no longer so compressed as it has been up to now. Ships can reach the coast between 70° and 75° n. Lat.; the ice stream floats on to be compressed again between Iceland and Greenland in the straits of Denmark, together with a north going warmer current coming from the Atlantic ocean, Irminger current, which flows along the west coast of Iceland forcing the polar-stream's ice-masses against the east coast of Greenland, where the stream of ice floats on in compact masses, blocking the coast. Only at one place — at *Angmagssalik* (66° n. Lat.) where a few hundred Eskimoes live, and where Denmark now has a commercial station and a mission, the ice disperses, on account of the issuing streams from some big fiords together with the curving of the land, allowing steamers to reach the coast in August and September; otherwise the ice lies compact in a broad

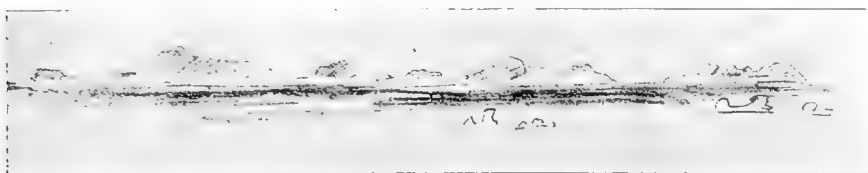
<sup>1</sup> "Landnámabók" means: book containing the story of the colonization, or the "taking of land" (*Landnám*).



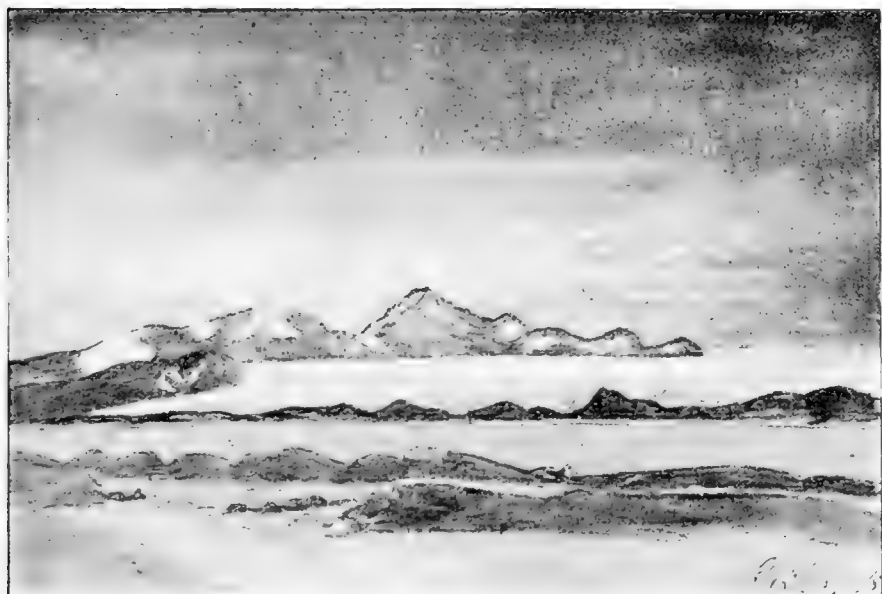
a



b



1—3. Sketches of the coast from Arsukfiord (a) to Nunarssuit (Hvarf?) (b) (D. B. 1894)



Frederikshaab-Glacier  
from a painting by the well-known Greenlander LARS MÖLLER.

belt, all along the steep mountainous coast, behind which the inland ice can be seen, right down to Cape "Farewell".

Meanwhile warmth, wind and sea have greatly decreased the ice, although great ice-masses still float round Cape "Farewell", blocking the coast, so that access to the southern part of the west-coast is exceedingly dangerous. The ice disperses, north of *Nunarssuit* and the promontories Cape Desolation and Cape Thorvaldsen, (on  $61^{\circ} 40'$  n. Lat.) likewise here caused by the issuing of the rivers and the curving of the country, and one can sail in to the land, as a rule, close to the north of the high mountainous island.

The waters washing Greenland's coasts, are on the whole characterized by the masses of ice to be found there. They appear under two heads: Icebergs and floating saltwater ice. Icebergs originate, as one knows, from the mighty inland ice which practically covers the whole of Greenland's interior. Big pieces of inland ice, break off and are discharged through the glacier, to float away either as an iceberg or small ice. Icebergs can attain quite a considerable height, sometimes 100 meters above the level of the sea, and as only  $\frac{1}{8}$  of the iceberg's volume is visible above the surface of the water, they can reach the bottom of the sea even at very great depths. They often ground on the bars outside the fiords until they melt. The Danish North Greenland's mighty glaciers are the origin of most of the icebergs on the westcoast, others come from Greenland's east coast, driven by the north current over to the west coast together with the *Polar-ice* (Drift-ice) formed on the sea, from the arctic ocean, north-east of Greenland. The waters on the south west coast are as a rule free from ice — from September to February; but when the ice masses in the arctic ocean begin to drift in the spring, one sees them coming round Cape Farewell up towards Julianehaabsbay, which is barred by masses of ice from April to August, during the best part of the summer time. The ice, sometimes, stretches in the evening as far as the eye can see, and in the morning it has completely disappeared. One can lie between compact masses of ice without being able to see the slightest opening, and a couple of hours later the whole has dispersed in every direction; as these tremendous floating ice masses are submitted to quick changes, navigation is difficult in these waters.

The old Norsemen were splendid sailors, who were never afraid of sailing through the ice. Their small cleverly managed boats were of great use to them here. They were in several respects better adapted to sailing through the ice than the bigger sailing-boats of latter days.

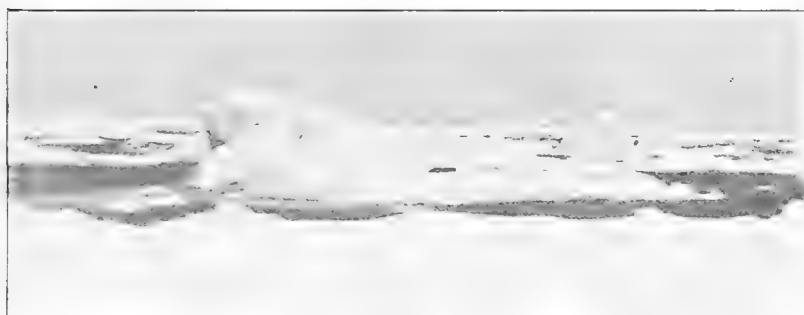
The Swedish Professor O. PETTERSON has tried to prove the likelihood of Greenland's climate being different in olden days from a later period, and that Greenland's coasts were fairly free of ice; this will explain certain conditions of the colonies (such as the inhabitation), but this supposition must still be regarded as a hypothesis.

If we take for granted that the conditions of the ice — with a few



In the drift ice.

(D. B. 1903)



Drift ice.

(A. Jessen 1894)



The Inland-ice descending towards the coast (Eastern settlement). (photo.)

warmer and better periods — were the same in those times as now, one was obliged in the olden days to land at about the same place as now, or in the neighbourhood of *Nunarssuit*. There is no doubt of this being the case when one reads the old course directions correctly.

One of the most important treatises in existence which gives evidence concerning the nature of Greenland, is the "*Konungs Skuggsjá*" ("*Kings-Mirror*") from the thirteenth century. It appears in the form of a discourse between a father and son, in which the first named explains and the son enquires: «*The Father* — — — as soon as one has crossed the greater part of the great sea there is such a profusion of ice on the water, such as one never sees in any other part of the world. This ice is partly so flat that it seems to be frozen to the sea itself, of about 4 to 5 ells thick, and it lies so far from land that it takes four or more days to reach it when one crosses the ice; but this ice lies more to the northeast or north beyond the land, than towards the south, southwest or west, and therefore all who wish to reach the country should sail round it to the southwest and west until he has passed all the places where ice is to be expected, and then sail straight up to the land (as stated by us). But it has continually happened that the sailors have sought land too early and therefore have been surrounded by ice. Many in this situation died, but some escaped; we have met some of them and heard their reports and tales. All those who have been in this drift of ice have grasped the same remedy, and have drawn small boats up onto the ice with them, and so sought land, but the ship and all other property remained behind to perish, some had, moreover, before they reached land, been obliged to spend 4 or 5 days on the ice, others much longer.

This ice is of wonderful construction: at times it lies as still as can be expected with several creeks or big fiords, but at other times its speed is so great and violent that it does not move slower than a ship before a good wind, and it floats as often against the wind, as with it, when it is once well started. There is another sort of ice in the sea, which is of another form and which is called "*Falliökull*" by Greenlanders. It is of such a shape as if a high mountain stood up out of the sea, and it never mixes with other ice but keeps to itself. In this sea there are also many kinds of whales of which we have spoken before. One says there are all sorts of seals in the sea, which float with the ice — as if they never lacked food there.»

This record shows that the old ice-navigators knew exactly the movement of the ice and its situation. They knew that they had to round the southwest coast of Greenland to be able to land.

Also in the descriptions by IVAR BAARDSON, which dates from the 14th century, one finds the exact information of navigation: when one sails from Bergen to Greenland one should:

"Arrive at a high piece of land called *Hvarf* in Greenland; the



Glacier at the head of Arsukfiord  
(Eastern settlement, northern part.)

(photo.)



Icebergs in a fiord  
(Eastern settlement).

(A. Jessen 1894)

day before, one should see another high mountain called "Hvidserk" before seeing the above described Hvarf".

One believed formerly that "*Hvarf*" was the same as *Kangek*, in our days the south point of *Sermersôk*; but I do not doubt that one rightly ought to move "Hvarf" over to the west, to Nunarssuit; towards which point he who travels now-a-days steers when going to the neighbourhood of *Julianehaab*, and even to the whole south west coast. It is a very prominent point on the coast, easily discerned, and as ice first here is free of land, it is not too bold to assume that *Eric the Red* also reached land here after having tried in vain to land on the east coast and the most southern part of the west coast. His journey took place in the summer, and he must probably have found ice all along the coast without being able to break through before here. And in this connection, it should be stated that John Davis in 1535 reached the coast at the same place.

We read about Eric's journey in the "Landnámabók", as follows:

"He was during the first winter on Ericsey (Eric's island) near the middle of the western settlement, [in other codices is written "eastern" which is more probable]. In the spring he went to *Ericsfjord* (now *Tunugdliarfik*) and dwelt there (chose a place for his farm). In the summer he went to the western uninhabited region and gave many places their names. The second winter he was in *Ericsholms* by *Hvarfsgnipa* (Nunarssuit?); but the third summer he went right up to the north to *Snæfjell* (Snowmountain) and in 'o *Hrafnfjord*. There, he thought that he had come beyond the inner end of Ericsfjord (probably he went northwards into Ikersuak — further on into *Sermilik*, the head of which lies opposite the end of *Tunugdliarfik*, and in the south he reached *Hrafnfjord*, or *Únartok* of our days). He then returned and spent the third winter on *Ericsey* (Eric's island) opposite the entrance to Ericsfjord. The following summer he left for Iceland reaching Breidafjord with his ship".

As it will be seen Eric took good care not to spend the winter in the fiords on his ship. He knew, too well, from Iceland the danger of being shut in by the ice, therefore he remained outside near *Nunarssuit* where he could get free of the ice. It was not his intention of remaining in the country for the present. When his outlawry was at an end he went home to fetch some colonists.

It is narrated in *Landnámabók* as follows: "He spent that winter with *Ingolf* at *Holmlátr*. In the spring he fought *Thorgest*. Eric was vanquished and they became reconciled. Eric sailed away in the same summer to inhabit the country he had found".

In the "*Flateyjarbók*" we read: "Eric was in Iceland during the winter, but the following summer he left so as to colonize the Greenland; he lived at Brattahlid in Ericsfjord.

Well informed people relate, that in the same summer as Eric





(Chr. Kruse 1902)

*Archangelica officinalis*  
near Angmagssalik (East coast).



(N. V. Ussing 1900)

Birch-tree near Kragtut in Tunugdliarfikfjord  
(Ericsfjord) (Eastern settlement).

the Red sallied forth to colonize Greenland 35 ships sailed from Breidafjörð and Borgarfjörð but only 14 reached the country, some were driven back and others lost. It was 14 or 15 winters, before Christianity was adopted in Iceland by law (about: 985 or 986); in the same summer bishop Fredrich and Thorvald Kodransson left Iceland.

The following men, who had left with Eric annexed land and established themselves in Greenland; *Heriolf* took *Heriolfsfjörð* (<sup>1</sup>Amitsuarsuk) he lived at *Heriolfssness* (Ikigait). *Ketil*: *Ketilsfjörð* (Tasermiut), *Hrafn*: *Hrafnfjörð* (Unartok), *Sölvi*: *Sölvadal* (inside Illua), *Helgi Thorbrandsson* *Alptafjörð* (Sermilik), *Thorbiörn Glóra*: *Siglufjörð* (Agdluitsok), *Einar*: *Einarsfjörð* (Igalikofjörð), *Hafgrim*: *Hafgrimsfjörð* and *Vatnahverfi* (east of Igalikofjörð), *Arnlaug*: *Arnlaugsfjörð*, but some left for the western settlement, (Godthaabsfjörð and others).»

As it is seen in the extract from the before mentioned Saga, the colonists established themselves in Greenland, in two domains or settlements: the *Eystribygd* and *Vestribygd* (eastern settlement and western settlement) both of which — as we now know — lay on the south west coast of Greenland's shores, the one east and south the other west and north.

The eastern settlement which, according to an old manuscript besides other records, towards the end of its existence consisted of 190 farms, 12 churches and 2 convents, lay in the district of *Julianehaab*, from the region of Cape Farewell down to the present place of habitation *Tigssaluk* north of *Arsukfjörð*.

There were 6 days rowing between the western and eastern settlements and here lay a tract of land practically uninhabited (from *Tigssaluk* to *Ameralikfjörð*).

The western settlement lay principally in the "*Godthaab*" (good hope) district. There were 90 farms, and 4 churches. Numerous ruins of farms belonging to the Norsemen testify to this.

It took a long time before one was quite sure how to decipher the discovered ruins; but after the Danish expeditions had surveyed and dug the ruins out, in our days, there is no longer any doubt.

If one looks at the following map one will see, that the greatest part of the 190 + 90 farms, in all 280, are found. By that means the locations of the eastern and western settlements have been finally settled, one has even with great certainty been able to find the fjords, the names of which one knew partly through the Saga and partly through IVAR BAARDSON's records. We have already mentioned above where the colonists, spoken of in the Saga, settled.

The colonists established their farms in the deep fjords in Greenland, and sought the same livelihood as in Iceland only having to adapt

<sup>1</sup> We have stated the present Greenland names concerning the fjords, the identity of which is certain.



On the capturing grounds.  
The Angmagssat's scooped up by hand.  
Ameragdlafiord (Western settlement).  
(D. B. 1903)



Salmon fishing  
at the head of Tasermiutfiord (Ketilsfiord)  
(Eastern settlement).  
(Th. N. Krabbe 1906)

themselves to the slightly different circumstances nature here offered. They built houses of the same sort as in their mother-country, kept cows, sheep, goats and horses besides which they engaged in the capture of seals and whales, also fishing, especially in the rivers rich with salmon, but also in the fiords and on sea; as hunting. reindeer, hares and bears etc. gave good results, so the conditions of existence were far from being as hard as one would be inclined to believe.

As is known, there was a time when the conditions of nature in Greenland were quite different from what they are now. Greenland has, at an earlier geological period, had a tropical climate, during which time luxurious primeval forests spread over the country, leaves of which one still finds impressions of in stones; but this vegetation ceased suddenly.

Volcanic masses covered everything. Their degree of heat, and enormous pressure transformed a part of the vegetation to coal. Later on it turned cold again, so cold that the whole country became a wilderness of ice. Mountains and valleys disappeared under the covering of ice, and only the pointed peaks of the highest rose above the ice. — Greenland's glacial period corresponds to that of Europe. When the ice later on had retreated somewhat, the razed rocks became visible and the present narrow coast-land, the broadest part of which is 100 miles, lay exposed with its polished surface, and its deep inland fiords, such as we see it at the present day. High precipitous mountains, about 2000 meters, rise out of the sea, forming long peninsulas between the fiords. Beyond lay the rocks and a shoal of islands. Lakes and rivers are to be found in several places.

Greenland's rocks are of an old date. They are composed of primeval rocks, gnejs and crystalline slates. A newer formation is only found in parts, but a great deal of it is cut away by the ice. In geological respects Greenland is a very old country. Immediately after the primeval time the red *sandstone* (the so-called marble) was formed, which is found in *Tunugdliarfikfiord* and *Igalikofjord*. This sandstone marble has played a great part as building material for the colonists.

Although the parts of Greenland's west coast inhabited by the Norsemen, lie in the same latitude as Christiania, Bergen and Trondhjem, the presence of the ice masses and the polar stream effects the climate and nature, so that it resembles the northernmost part of Norway, north of the polarcircle or Iceland's Northland.

The climate is therefore decidedly Polarclimate.

Greenland's short summer is nearly over at the end of August. Although it can still be warm in the beginning of September, but the water soon begins to freeze, and the fiords are covered with ice at the end of October or the beginning of November. The weather becomes severer, the northern winds predominate and the storms break loose; but the fog disappears.

In the fiords where the glaciers disembogue, one sees *icebergs* the whole summer. Very often flakes of *Polar-ice* come also into the fiords,



(Chr. Kruse phot. <sup>81</sup>/<sub>7</sub> 1902)

Ground-Vegetation in a willow-thicket

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> size

Angmagssalik (East coast).

which otherwise lie outside (beyond) the coast. The ice in the fiords forms a bridge during the winter between the coasts and makes communication easier. Doubtless, the Norsemen have used sledges on the ice.

When one has passed through the long, narrow, deeply incised fiords, one reaches land, and there vegetation first breaks forth, attaining in the innermost part of the fiords a comparatively high degree of luxuriance which is not inferior to that in Iceland. It was specially here that the Norsemen established themselves to rear cattle. There was no question of cereal culture in this inhospitable climate. With regards to agriculture it had to be based entirely on pasture, and they had to concentrate themselves to the breeding of cattle, in the same fashion as in their own country.

Most of the farms lay, as mentioned, in the innermost part of the fiords, most frequently near the shore; but several are found up country, which is the case in the undulating, not especially raised ground, abounding in water, between *Tunugdliarfikfiord* (*Ericsfjord*) and *Sermilikfiord* (*Isafjord* i. e.: Icefiord), also in the region between *Igalikofjord* (*Einarsfiord*) and *Agdluitsok* (*Siglufjord*); the Norsemen called this part of the country "*Vatnahverfi*" on account of its having many lakes. In the western settlement, places were to be found in the innermost region of *Godthaabsfiord* and *Ameralikfiord* (*Lýsufjord*?) in which many farms were built on the shores of the fiords.

One can generally say that where there was a possibility of laying out a farm, in these parts, one is sure to find ruins of them. Big fenced homefields (*Tún*) which are covered with ruins of dwellings, stables and folds, etc. are still to be seen in many places; we shall hear more of these later on.

Whilst one finds good pastures near some of the groups of ruins one is astonished at how little vegetation there is near others. If one meanwhile ascends the mountains one finds on the terraces and in the small valleys also on the highland table-lands fairly good pasturage where the cattle have found food and from where the Norsemen have been able to take hay home for winter-feeding.

At the head of the big fiords, where it is warm, one finds that the birch copice thrives well, as well as other Greenland bushes such as the grey willow, the green-alder the American roan, and the juniper berry. On the whole there is more of the willow copice than the birch; that which characterized them was *Kvan* (*Angelica*) a favourite food of the Norsemen. Green-sward and herbs cover the copice-ground; and it can be extraordinarily beautiful in a Greenland wood; also heaths, with their monotonous, dark brown tones, resembling quite our heaths, are most attractive in the summer when the flowers are in bloom. But up in the mountain-fields there are only the hardiest high northern plants, and the regions farthest north are evidently without vegetation. Vegetation on the other hand can be exceedingly fertile along the rivers and

pools, and it is a glorious sight to see such a landscape in the magnificence of summer.

In the rivers are salmon, in the fiords birds and fish, on the coasts, seals, — and in the mountains foxes, white hares and sometimes reindeer; to which can be added polar-bears and walruses, the teeth of which were a valuable article of export, and white hawks which were also exported for hunting. Eggs and feathers were taken from the breeding-places, — to which, the domestic animals in the time of the Norsemen were added, horses, cows, sheep and goats all of which were imported.

And now, after having given a general view of the conditions of nature such as they are, we will give an extract from the "*King's Mirror*" from which it appears that the Norsemen had very good accounts of these conditions in the middle ages, although here and there a mistake has slipped in:

"*The father:* You are desirous to know, what one searches in that country, or why one goes there, when there are so many dangers. One is tempted to do it through three qualities of human nature. Firstly the competitive spirit and the longing for celebrity, for the nature of many people force them to go there, however great the danger may be so that they can become celebrated. Secondly, the love of knowledge, human nature is disposed to investigate, so as to see, the things that have been told about, whether they really are as related, or not. Thirdly the earning of money, for riches are sought by everyone, where there is a profit to be gained, although, great dangers threaten them. But in Greenland, as you can understand, everything is expensive there, having to be brought from other countries, as that country lies so far away from other countries it is seldom that people go there, and everything that they use to improve the country must be imported, such as iron and timber of which they build houses. Over there one gets the following goods in exchange for ones wares: buckskin, oxenskin, sealskin, and the ropes, we have discussed, which one cuts out of a fish, called walrus, and which are called rind ropes, also their teeth.

Concerning that which you mentioned as to whether the country had any grain or not, my opinion is that the country produces very little. But there are men, the highest and mightiest who for the sake of experience try to sow, but the greatest number of people in that country do not know what bread is, and have never seen it. There are many hares and wolves and a great many reindeer. People believe that these animals are not bred on islands, unless they are brought there. They believe and know with certainty that no human being has taken them over there, but that they ran there by themselves from the other continents. There are also bears in that country, which are white, and one is of the opinion that they are bred there, for their nature is quite different from the black bears, who live in the woods, and hunt horses, oxen and other domestic animals as food, whilst the white bear in Greenland lives mostly in

the sea and on the ice, catching seals and whales on which it feeds. It is as great an expert in swimming as a seal or a whale.

But you asked whether the country was free from ice or not, or whether it was covered with ice like the sea, so know for a certainty that only a small part of the country is free from ice, all the rest being covered with it, so that it is not known how big the country is, because all the mountain ranges and valleys are hidden by ice, wherein no opening is to be found. — — — People have tried to go up country, onto the highest mountains in the different parts, to look round and try to find a part of the country that was free from ice and inhabitable, but such has never been found, except the regions inhabited at present which are of short extension along the coast itself. In the inhabited part of the country there is much marble of different colours, both red, blue and green. There are a number of hawks, which in other countries would be considered valuable, namely white hawks, which are in greater abundance than any thing else in the country although the inhabitants have no idea how to use them.

*The son:* You reminded me a little earlier in your discourse that there was no agriculture in that country, therefore I now ask what did the people live on, who lived there, how thickly was it populated, what sort of food they had, and whether they had accepted Christianity or not.

*The father:* There are only few people in the country on account of there being so little ice-free land, that is inhabitable, but they are Christians having both churches and priests and if it had lain nearer to other countries it would have been called the third part of a bishopric; now they have their own bishop as it cannot be otherwise owing to the great distance between them and other people.

But you wish to know what people lived on, in that country, there being no agriculture, people did not live on bread alone; it is said that there is good pasturage in Greenland, and there are good big breeding farms, as there are numbers of horned cattle and sheep, so much butter and cheese is made; people live on such products, besides meat and all sorts of hunting, such as venison, whales, seals and bears; in this manner people maintain themselves in that country. — — —

“You said of the weather that you could not understand that, that country was said to have good weather, now I will relate to you how conditions are in this country. At times when storms begin, it takes place with greater severity than at most places, both the violence of the storms and the intensity of frost and snow, but the bad weather only lasts a short time with long intervals, although the country is so cold. This is caused by the nature of the icebergs from which there perpetually streams cold air which drives all storm-clouds from its presence, and which keeps the air clear over head. But its nearest neighbours must suffer for this, because all countries lying in its neighbourhood get vehement storms from there.”





Snæfells-Jökull (glacier) in Iceland.  
The farm Arnarstapi in the foreground.

(photo.)

## Chapter III.

### The Saga of Eric the Red.

**T***o begin with*, several hundred people accompanied *Eric the Red* to Greenland, amongst whom were, chiefs with their households and thralls; but many freeborn men followed later on. The emigration to Greenland was so great, that it is assumed that the *Eystribygd* and the *Vestribygd* (eastern and western settlements) were essentially inhabited about the year 1000. The delight of exploit and the longing to travel led many people to Greenland; but there were also several, over whom the judgement of outlawry had been pronounced, who now sought a refuge here, in a more remote region, so as better to be able to avoid revenge for bloodshed.

In *Gisli Sursson's Saga*, in which there is a genuine saga of outlawry, we hear how the revenge for bloodshed overtook one after another of the contending races in Iceland, until at last a young man, *Helgi Vesteinson*, who had taken part in manslaughter escaped to Greenland: It is written:

"*Helgi* came there (in the time of *Eric the Red*) grew up and was strong. He was deemed an excellent man. There were sent assassins out to take his life but they did not succeed in trapping him. *Helgi* died whilst out fishing and his death was considered a great loss".

We shall later on hear more about several other Icelanders who likewise emigrated to the new colonies. Dissatisfied chiefs also came to Greenland from Norway, such as *Thronð* from the Uplands who left the country on account of *Harold Hardrede's* persecution — about the middle of the 11th century.

The colonists in Greenland soon agreed to regulate their association in the same way as in Iceland. To judge from this, Greenland's constitution, was the same as over there, an aristocratic republic. One accepted mainly, the laws of Iceland, and once a year they gathered in court at *Gardar* the present Igaliko, which lay on the tongue of land (*Eid*) between *Ericsfjord* and *Einarsfjord*. Here the judicial proceedings took place, according to ancient Icelandic-Norwegian fashion. Firstly the assembly of lawgivers, consisting of chiefs and their assessors, secondly the tribunal and lastly the "lawspeaker" who pronounced and interpreted the laws.

*Eric the Red* had no particular command over the other Greenland well-to-do-farmers, but they willingly subordinated themselves to his capacity, intellect and his administrative talent, so that it can be said that he had been the highest chief in the republic, the lawspeaker of which he probably had been.

We shall now go over, according to the Saga, to relate events which took place, during his, his son's and his son's son's time, for through them we get a glimpse of the conditions which stamped the flourishing and wrestling age of the country.

We shall begin with:

#### The Saga about Eric the Red.

It relates first about a Norwegian king of the Vikings *Olaf the White*, who undertook an expedition in westerly direction to Ireland, where he was made king in Dublin, and where later on he was killed. He was married to *Aud* the "deep-minded" who was a Norwegian woman of a great family. Their son, *Thorstein the Red* was as proud a Viking as his father. He ended his life as king over a part of Scotland; after which *Aud* built a ship in which she sailed to Iceland. Here she took land in the Dales on the west coast, and established herself on the farm *Hvam* by *Hvamsfjord*, therefore in the same region where *Eric the Red* came to live.

"She was wont to pray on "*Krossholar*" (the crossheights) here she raised a cross, for she was christened and a devout woman".

At *Hvam* the place is still shown where she said her prayers. When she came to Iceland she had twenty free-born men in her suite, to them she gave land, but there were also some high born men who had been taken prisoners on a Viking expedition, and who therefore were called thralls. Amongst them was *Vifil* whom she gave free, and who lived at *Vifilstad*. He was a man of great presence, and his sons *Thorbiörn* (a friend of Eric the Red) and *Thorgeir* resembled their father. The Saga here relates how Eric the Red found Greenland, as we have already heard.

We now turn to *Snæfellsness*, on whose extremest point to the west, the ice-covered mountain *Snæfell* lies, at the foot of which there lay



The mountain range, Igdlervígsalik (Búrfell) in Tunugdliarfikfjord (Eric'sfjord), seen from Taperssuatsiak.  
(N. V. Ussing 1900)  
Distance about 35 kilometres.

farms surrounded by ancient masses of lava; which became the scene of the events about to be related.

### About Thorbiörn.

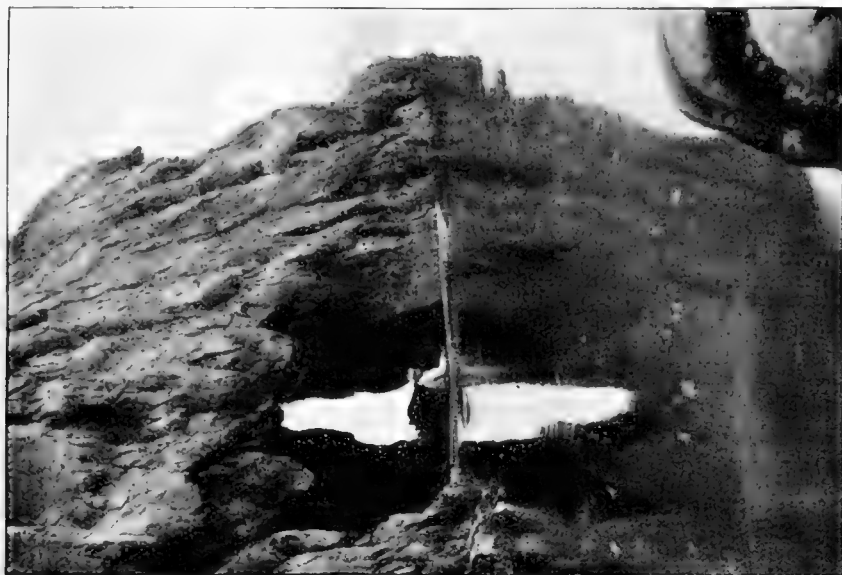
"*Thorgeir Vifilsson* married *Arnora* daughter of *Einar Sigmundsson* from *Laugarbrekka*, whose father *Sigmund* was a son of *Ketil Thistil* who had taken *Thistilfjord* in possession. *Einar* had another daughter *Halveig*. *Thorbiörn* married her and she brought him *Laugarbrekka-land* in *Hellisvellir*. *Thorbiörn* removed here and became an esteemed man. He was a good farmer and he kept a stately house. His daughter was named *Gudrid* and she was the most beautiful woman seen, and brisk in all her doings. She was brought up by *Orm* on his farm *Arnarstapi*. He was an honest farmer and a good friend of *Thorbiörn*. His wife was called *Halldis*. — — —

When spring came, *Thorbiörn* invited his friends, many people came and the feast was magnificent. During the feast *Thorbiörn* bade silence, and said: "Here I have lived a long time, and seen proof of people's kindness and friendship towards me, and it occurs to me that we have lived in good understanding with one another, but now I am declining, and instead of being a rich man, I am hard pressed for money. I would rather dissolve my household and leave here than lose my reputation, and so as not to disgrace my family I will leave the country, and I depend upon the promise given me, by my friend *Eric the Red*, when we parted at *Breidafjord*. If all goes well, I intend leaving for *Greenland* this summer".

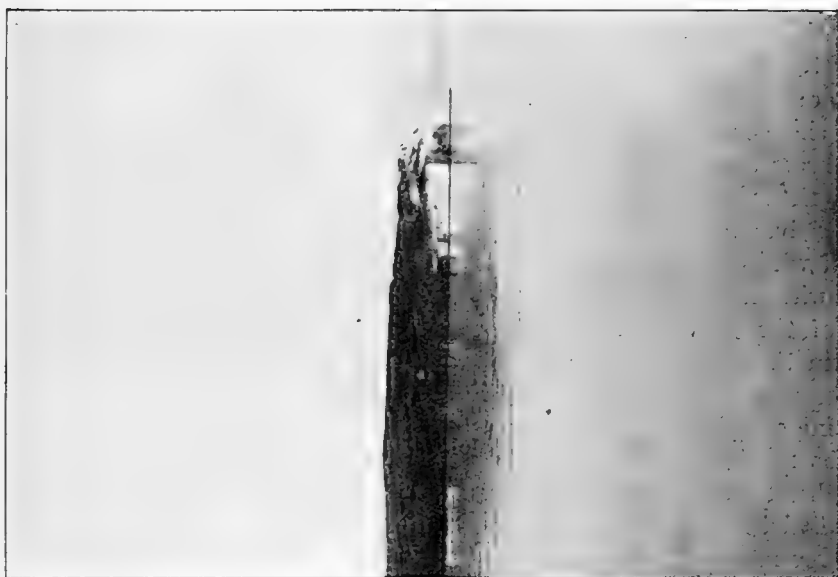
*Thorbiörn's* speech made a deep impression upon the people, as he had been very popular — and as it had got thus far that he acknowledged his poor position they were convinced that it was of no use to advise him not to do it.

*Thorbiörn* gave them presents and the feast ended, after which every man went home. He sold his property and bought a ship which was drawn up at the entrance of *Hraunhöfn* (*Hraunharbour*). Thirty people were to travel with him, amongst them *Orm* and his wife from *Arnarstapi* besides several of *Thorbiörn's* friends who would not be separated from him.

They sailed, and after reaching open-sea the wind dropped, they lost their way and had great difficulties to fight with during the summer. Besides which illness broke out amongst them, *Orm* died, his wife likewise, and half of the crew. The sea became more and more tempestuous, they suffered great inconveniences, and wretchedness increased in every way; but in the beginning of winter they reached, in spite of all, *Herjolfsness* in *Greenland* (one of the farms furthest south in the eastern settlement, now *Ikigait*). The man living at *Herjolfsness* was called *Thorkel*, he was an exceedingly worthy man, who received *Thorbiörn* and



(N. V. Ussing 1900)  
Mountain-gate at Naujarssuit Tunugdliarfik (Ericsford)  
(Eastern settlement).



(N. V. Ussing 17. Aug. 1900)  
Iceberg, covered with moraine, Sermilikfjord (Isafjord)  
(Eastern settlement).

his companions and gave them willingly every possible assistance during the winter.

A great famine prevailed over Greenland at this time, as those who had been out fishing, had only had a bad draught, and some had never returned”.

We now come to the tale of *Völva* whose appearance is exactly the same as the Norwegian *Völva*'s who travelled from settlement to settlement and who foretold ones fortune, the weather etc. They were not greatly respected, says Finnur Jónsson, but greatly feared; therefore they were treated, let us say, with great care. The records from Iceland are silent on the subject of these *Völva*, and in all probability the sort of women, went straight to Greenland from Norway, as only here one finds reports concerning the activity of the “*Völva*”.

“There lived a woman in the settlement, named *Thorbiörg*, who was a fortune teller, and was called the little *Völva*. She had had nine sisters, all fortune tellers, but now she was the only one living.

During the winter *Thorbiörg* used to travel from one feast to another, and they who wished to know their future, or how the year would turn out, invited her. As *Thorkel* was the chief peasant he considered it his affair to get to know when this bad year, which had set in, would again disappear. So he invited the prophetess, and as the custom was when such a woman was to come, she was well received, a throne was raised for her, — on it was placed a cushion, filled with hen's feathers, for her to sit on. When she arrived in the evening, accompanied by a man, sent out to fetch her, she was attired as follows: Over her dress she had a blue overall tied together with thongs and trimmed with stones down to the knee. Round her neck she had glass beads and on her head a cap of black lamb's skin which was lined with a white cat-skin. In her hand she held a staff, on which there was a knob, the staff was ornamented with brass and it was set with stones at the top around the knob. Round her waist, she had a “*Knjóskulindi*” (a sort of belt) from which a big leather bag hung, and in which she kept her witch's instruments, the use of which she had whilst telling her fortunes. Her feet were in shoes lined with calfskin, having long and strong straps in them, and at the end of these there were tin buttons, on her hands she had gloves of catskin the inside of which were white and woolly. When she came in, it was the duty of all to greet her with honour, she received the greeting of each according to her pleasure. The master *Thorkel* took her by the hand and led her to the seat which was prepared for her. He bade her look upon his house, folk and cattle in charity, but she said very little. We will here relate that in the evening when the tables were brought in, the prophetess was served with groats boiled in goats milk, after that the hearts of all the animals which could be found.

She had a brass spoon, and a copper knife, the point of which was broken off, and hung in a haft made of a walrus tooth encircled by two



Nunasarnak mountain (620 m), seen from Tuperssuatsiak, Tunugdliarfikfjord (Eric'sfjord).  
(N. V. Ussing 1900)

rings. After the tables had been removed farmer *Thorkel* stood before *Thorbjörg* and asked her what impression she had on looking round, how the compartments and the behaviour of his people pleased her, and how soon she would get information on the subject of which he had spoken to her, and about which they all anxiously awaited enlightenment. She let him understand that she could say nothing before the next morning, after having spent the night there. Towards evening, on the next day the necessary preparations were made for her to accomplish the "*Seid*" (a sort of witchery).

She bade them moreover, procure some women who knew the magic chant that belonged to the "*Seid*", and was called *Vardlokkur* (or the invocation of the guardian spirits), but there were none. The farms were searched to find one who knew it, and Gudrid said: "I am neither well informed in magic nor an enchantress; but in Iceland my foster mother *Halldis* taught me a chant she called *Vardlokkur*".

"Thou art fortunate being so learned", said *Thorkel*. To which Gudrid answered: "I am a christian woman and I yield no help to such things". *Thorbiörg* now joined the conversation remarking. "It might be thou wouldst be doing others a service by it without becoming more inferior, but I depend upon *Thorkel* to get what I require." *Thorkel* urged Gudrid and she yielded. The women now encircled the magic-throne on which *Thorbiörg* sat. Gudrid now sang the chant so beautifully and so well that all present thought they had never heard anyone sing with so fine a voice, before. The prophetess thanked her for the chant and said, many of the spirits who would escape and not obey her, had come as they thought it beautiful to hear the chant sung so well. "And now I see many things clearly, which before have been concealed from me and many others. Now I can tell thee *Thorkel* that this bad year will not last longer than this winter, and everything will be better in the spring. The illness which has raged here will end sooner than expected; thou, Gudrid I will straightway reward for the assistance thou hast given us. Thy future is now quite clear. Here in Greenland, thou wilt be most esteemly married but only a short time wilt thou be able to enjoy it, for thy way leads to Iceland, and there thou wilt be the ancestress to a good and big race, and over thy descendants clearer rays will shine, than I have the power to follow more closely; but I greet thee my daughter, farewell."

After that they all went to the fortune-teller and each asked that which they most wished to know. She gave good answers, and she was not far from wrong in what she said.

She was then fetched from another farm and she repaired thither at once. They now sent for *Thorbiörn*, who did not wish to be at home whilst they practised witchcraft.

The weather was soon milder, as spring came, such as *Thorbiörg* had said. *Thorbiörn* prepared his ship and continued his journey until





View towards the northern part of Sermersôk  
(Eastern settlement).

(A. Jessen 1894)



Calf-ice in the northern Sernilikfiord (Isafiord)  
(Eastern settlement).

(Count C. Moltke 1894)

he reached *Brattahlid*. Eric received him kindly and said that it was a good thing he had come. *Thorbiörn* and his family remained with him that winter, but the crew were established with the other peasants. In the spring Eric gave *Thorbiörn* ground on *Stokkaness* where a stately farm was built, and where he lived afterwards". (It lay, as it is elsewhere written, also in *Ericsfiord*, probably on the opposite coast to *Brattahlid*).

It was only a short period in which the northern Greenland colonists were allowed to be heathens. Already in the year 1000, at the same time as Christianity was introduced into Iceland by a decision of Parliament, after a slight opposition it was accepted in Greenland, *Leif Ericsson* having worked for it. In the year 999 he sailed from Greenland to Norway direct, this was most likely the first time a journey had been taken straight across the Atlantic ocean without touching Iceland.

The Saga relates:

**„About Leif the Fortunate and the introduction of Christianity into Iceland.**

Eric had a wife called *Thiodhild*, and by her two sons, the one called *Thorstein* and the other *Leif*<sup>1</sup>; they were both handsome men, *Thorstein* remained at home with his father, and there was at that time no man in Greenland of greater promise than he. *Leif* sailed to Norway and was with King *Olaf Tryggvason*. When he sailed from Greenland, in the summer they were driven to the southern islands (*Hebrides*) and there they remained a good time during the summer waiting for a fair wind which took long in coming. — — —

*Leif* sailed away with his folk from the islands and came to Norway at harvest-time. He repaired to King *Olaf Tryggvason's* court. The King paid him great honour, being of the opinion that he was a well educated man. One day the king spoke to *Leif*:

“Thinkest thou of travelling in the summer to Greenland?”

“It is my intention if thou agreest.”

“Yes, I am of the opinion, that it would be well, and thou shalt travel on my errand, and proclaim Christianity to people.”

*Leif* answered that the King must be obeyed; but he added, that the commission was difficult to accomplish in Greenland. Here unto the king said, that he knew no man better adapted for it than he “and thou wilt surely succeed.”

“If it be so, it will happen alone through my benifitting so much by your good fortune”.

*Leif* started on his journey, drifting about on the sea and finding

<sup>1</sup> In addition to which a third son *Thorvald* who is first mentioned later, likewise an illegitimate daughter *Freydis*. Storm concludes that *Thorvald* was also illegitimate and *Finnur Jónsson* is of the same opinion.



(W. Thalbitzer 1914)

The colony Frederiksdal or Narssak (old Sandhöfn)  
(Eastern settlement).



(W. Thalbitzer 1914)

The fiord near Sangmisok  
The most southern trading place in Greenland today.  
(Eastern settlement).

countries, the existence of which he knew nothing of beforehand. There were self sown wheat-fields, vines grew, also trees called Masur (a sort of birch-tree), and they took specimens of all this, including some tree-trunks, so big that they were used for houses."

The country here mentioned, was "Vineland" on the north American east-coast, of which we shall hear more later on: The Saga continues:

"Leif found some people who were shipwrecked sitting on the wreck, and took them home with him.

He luckily introduced Christianity into the country, and on this occasion, as on all others, he showed himself to be a gallant man and the right one, and he saved the wretched men. Since then he has constantly been called *Leif* the Fortunate.

Leif landed in Ericsfiord, from there he proceeded home to Brat-tahlid where all received him kindly. He soon proclaimed Christianity and the universal (catholic) belief, in the country, bringing the people King *Olaf Tryggvason's* declaration, explaining to them at the same time what great glory and honour there was in that belief.

Eric was unwilling to give up his belief, but *Thiodhild* was soon induced to do so, she built a church, not too near to the houses; it was called *Thiodhild's* church. She and those who had accepted Christianity prayed here. After accepting the belief, *Thiodhild* would have no intercourse with *Eric* which displeased him greatly."

Although Eric the Red, would not accept the new doctrine it seems on the other hand he was not greatly opposed to it being introduced. His attitude towards this matter is best seen through his remark to Leif, "that the two things were equal, his having saved the shipwrecked, and his having brought "*Skæmann*" (the hypocrite) — as he called the priest — along with him".

Besides this priest, Leif is said to have brought several ecclesiastical men with him, and several more came later. Conversion presumeably had taken place, as they were in the settlements. Christianity was probably received here as in Iceland through the decision of Parliament.

In the beginning, the Greenland church, as well as the Scandinavian was under the Archbishop in Bremen, until the year 1103, when the Archbishopric was established in Lund. Later still (1152) the Greenland and Iceland dioceses came in under the Archbishopric in Trondhjem. About the middle of the 11th century Christianity must have penetrated Greenland. *Adam of Bremen* informs us that messengers came from Greenland to the Archbishop *Adalbert* (1043—72) begging him to send them clergy.

Having finished with these remarks, we will once more take up the Saga records about the first attempt to sail to Vineland:

"Now there was much talked of a voyage of discovery which ought to be taken to that country found by Leif. It was especially *Thorstein Ericsson* both a clever and popular man, who urged it. Eric was



View in southern Streamfiord  
(Western settlement).

(photo.)



View from the southern Sermilik  
(Eastern settlement).

(W. Thalbitzer 1914)

requested to go with them, as they had the greatest confidence in his sagacity and good fortune. He was for some time disinclined, but as his friends urgently bade him do it he would not say no.

So they repaired the ship on which *Thorbiörn* had come to Greenland, and it was decided that twenty men should take the journey. They took only few goods with them but weapons and provisions.

That morning, on which the departure was to take place, Eric rode away from his home after having hidden a casket in the earth, wherein there was gold and silver. On the way an accident happened to him, he fell off his horse and broke some ribs besides hurting his arm at the shoulder. He told his wife *Thiodhild* to take the casket with the money up again, and he intimated, that it all had happened on account of his having hidden the money and for that reason he must suffer.

Thereupon they gladly sailed out of Ericsfiord, expecting much from their journey. They drifted a long time, not going the way they wished to. First they sighted Iceland, then they saw birds from Ireland. Thus their ship drifted hither and thither on the sea. They returned in the autumn greatly damaged by the rough weather and sleet, and fatigued by their toils. The winter had set in when they reached Ericsfiord.

Eric remarked:

"More joyful were you as you sailed out of the fiord in the summer, than we are now, but there are still many good remedies for us, to be found."

Hereto Thorstein remarked:

"It now befits chiefs to take care of all the men here (on board) who have no place of resort — and find lodgings for them during the winter."

Eric's answer was:

"It is a standing truth, that a case is not clear before it is answered. Such it is in this case. Now we will follow thy advice."

All of them who had no winter quarters, accompanied Eric and Thorstein to Brattahlid where they remained that winter.

### **Thorstein Ericsson married Gudrid.**

#### **The spectre.**

Now it is told, that Thorstein Ericsson wooed *Gudrid*, and both she and her father accepted the courtship with pleasure and everything was arranged. Thorstein and Gudrid's wedding was held at Battahlid in the autumn. There where many present and the feast was a success.

Thorstein lived on a farm in the western settlement called Lysufiord (in the present Ameralikfiord?) Half of the farm belonged to a man called *Thorstein*, whose wife was called *Sigrid*.

At harvest time Thorstein went to Lysufiord to his namesake, ac-

accompanied by *Gudrid*. They were well received and they remained there during the winter. Straightway in the beginning an illness came to the farm<sup>1</sup>. First *Gard*, a man who understood farm labour, but who was not popular, was taken ill and died; then they died one after another. The illness now attacked Thorstein Eriksson and his namesake Thorstein's wife *Sigrid*. One evening she went to the "little house" which stood opposite the house door; *Gudrid* accompanied her, and as they stood turned towards the entrance, *Sigrid* uttered a cry.

*Gudrid* said: "We have been incautious, hasten, so that thou dost not take cold, let us go in again, as quickly as possible."

*Sigrid* answered: "It is not so easy to go back again, as things are now, for a host of dead are in front of the door, also thy husband *Thorstein* — and I see myself — what a terrible sight it is."

When the vision had disappeared she said: "Let us now go *Gudrid*! I see the host no longer."

*Gard* had now disappeared from her sight — the moment before she thought he had a scourge in his hand, with which he would beat the host of dead. So they went in and before the morning dawned she was dead; a coffin was made for the corpse. On the same day the farmhands wished to go out fishing, and *Thorstein* accompanied them down to the wharf, and in the twilight he went again so as to see their draught. At the same time *Thorstein Ericsson* sent his namesake a message saying that he would visit him, — there was great disturbance up there. The dead mistress (*Sigrid*) was about to raise herself onto her feet and she wished to get into his bed under the covers. When he came in she was on the bedstocks; but he caught hold of her with his hands and held a bole axe before her breast. *Thorstein Ericsson* died before the day was at an end. *Thorstein* (peasant) had begged *Gudrid* to lie down and sleep whilst he watched over the bodies during the night. When a part of the night had passed, *Thorstein Ericsson* sat up and began to talk. He wished *Gudrid* to come as he would speak to her.

"God has released me at this hour so that I may improve my situation."

Farmer Thorstein then went to *Gudrid*, woke her, bade her cross herself and prayed God to help her — he then told her, that which Thorstein Ericsson had said to him:

"He wishes to speak to thee, thou must thyself decide what thou wilt do. I can neither advise nor dissuade."

She answered:

"It is possible that this wonderful incident has an object which will be remembered later on. I hope God will take me under his care,

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<sup>1</sup> The following statement will show how deeply superstition and fear of ghosts had taken root in people of that day.

and with his mercy I will venture in to him so as to hear what he wishes to say. I cannot in any case escape that which will hurt me, and I do not wish him to continue his haunting, which otherwise he might do."

So *Gudrid* went to Thorstein. It seemed to her that he was crying and he whispered some words, which she alone could hear, then he cried — so every body could hear him — that they who kept their belief, would be blessed, as it contained all help and mercy; but very few kept its commands:

"It is a bad custom, that has entered Greenland, since Christianity has been introduced, to bury people in unconsecrated ground and not chant over them properly. I wish, that all those who have died here may be taken to the church, but I wish *Gard* to be burnt, as soon as possible, on a pyre as he is the cause of all the haunting which has taken place this winter."

He foretold her, her own future circumstances which he thought would be considerable; but he bade her beware of marrying any Greenland man. Their wealth he wished her to give partly to the church and partly to the poor; he then fell back for the second time.

It had been the custom in Greenland after the introduction of Christianity to bury people on the farms where they died, in unconsecrated ground, setting a pole at the breast of the dead, so that the priest when he came later on, even if it was a long time after, could pull the pole up and pour holy water into the hole chanting masses over them at the same time.

Thorstein and the other bodies were taken to the church in Ericsfiord (at Brattahlid) and the priests sang over them. Shortly afterwards Thorbiörn died and the great wealth fell to the lot of *Gudrid*, Eric took her to live with him and took good care of her affairs."







The laying to of a Viking-ship. (photo from the original)

Taken from the Bayeux Tapestry, representing King William the Conqueror's campaign in England, in 1066.

## Chapter IV.

### The great Vineland-voyage 1003—1006.

**W**e now come to the records of the voyages to Vineland, of which much has been written in our days, as the trustworthiness of the Saga concerning them, has been greatly doubted, especially by FRIDTJOF NANSEN. The Norwegian GUSTAV STORM has already maintained earlier, that the essence of Eric the Red's Saga, regarding the voyages to Vineland, is right, and FINNUR JÓNSSON has lately decisively expressed the same — even if one thing or another, perhaps influenced by the tales and traditions of the middle ages, is embellished or misunderstood.

However it may be, America's mainland was certainly visited by the Norwegian sailors five hundred years before *Columbus* landed at Guanahani, but these Norsemen's discovery of the new world did not lead to any lasting colonization, and the accounts of the journeys undertaken, were not known to the European world, beyond a limited Scandinavian circle.

In C. C. RAFN's big work "*Antiquitates Americanæ*" (1837) is collected in one place all which ancient literature communicates of the Norsemen's Vineland voyages, which is also the case with the work "*Grønlands historiske Mindesmærker*" ("Greenland's historical memorials"), which was published shortly after by "The Royal Society of the Northern Antiquaries".

ADAM OF BREMEN is the oldest informant who mentions Vineland, he collected, whilst staying at the Danish court about 1070, accounts of the northern countrie's geography. In his work it is written (IV p. 38):

"He related further (i. e.: King *Svend Estridsson*), that another island had been found by many, in that ocean (the northern), called "Vineland" because vines grew there of themselves which made the best wine. I have heard there is also an abundance of corn, without being sown; not a groundless information, but through the positive accounts of the Danes." Therefore there must have been a wide spread opinion or knowledge of "Vineland" amongst the Danes at the time of *Svend Estridsson*, probably grounded on the Northmen and Icelandic's accounts which again referred to the Greenland-Icelandic traditions.

Amongst the accountants of the "Vineland's" history of discovery, *ARI FRODI* shall next be mentioned. In his before mentioned "Icelandic-book" he mentions "*Vineland*" in such a manner (Page 19) that — as *FINNUR JÓNSSON* says, — its discovery and existence was considered an unquestionable reality and universally known.

*ARI FRODI* was born quite fifty years after the discovery of Vineland; but his father's brother *Thorkel Gellisson*, who had got his information from a man who had visited *Eric the Red* in Greenland, heard about the Vineland expeditions, was as already mentioned, his informant.

In the *annals* of Iceland, there are notes of Bishop *Eric*, who in the year 1121, undertook a journey, to discover (rediscover) Vineland, therefore about the same time as *Ari's* composition, more of which we shall tell later.

Now we come to the sagalike accounts of the voyages to Vineland. *Eric the Red's* Saga, presumeably written about the year 1200 or the first quarter of the 13th century, lies in two later manuscripts, which principally give the original Saga accounts about the voyages to "Vineland" in a — as already said — trustworthy form. On the other hand, other accounts are to be found about them, in the very unreliable so called "*Greenlendingapáttir*" which are found in the Flatey-book's Saga of *Olaf Trygvason*. It is far different from *Eric's* Saga, although certain details are the same. In the latter saga five Vineland journeys are mentioned. The principal person mentioned in the tale, and the real discoverer of the western countries, is a certain *BJARNI HERIOLFSSON*. Whether he was a real or a fictitious person is not certain, *GUSTAV STORM* thinks the latter to be the case.

We shall recapitulate *Bjarni's* story quite shortly, he was the son of *Heriolf* who went to Greenland with *Eric the Red*, and who established himself in *Heriolfssness*, the most southern settlement. *Bjarni* was a rich and worthy man, who owned a ship in which he sailed from Norway to Iceland, where he ascertained that his father had left, for Greenland, during that summer with *Eric*. He boldly decided to search his father in Greenland, he got damaged in a fog and north wind, and came to a tract of coast in the west, without fiords, but with small hills overgrown with woods. *Bjarni* did not think it could be Greenland, so sailed northwards for two days before seeing another country. This country was flat and also covered with woods. *Bjarni* said: "Neither this is



The view of the head of Ameragda (Lysufjord in the western settlement), seen from Kilársartik.  
A big Norsefarm and a church stood on the headland in the foreground.

(photo 1903)

Greenland, as they say there are very big icebergs over there". Now the crew wished to land, they pretended that they lacked fuel and water, but Bjarni was not to be induced to comply with their wishes. He said it was only an excuse on their side, therefore he turned the bows of the boat from land and sailed before a south west wind for three days, after which they again sighted land. This country was mountainous and covered with glaciers. But Bjarni would not land here either; he thought, that neither this could be Greenland, nor that it offered any serviceable place of resort. They turned therefore out to sea again and sailed before the same wind for four days, they then sighted a country in the distance. Then Bjarni said at last: "This resembles Greenland most, to judge by what I have been told about it, and here we will steer towards land." Here Bjarni found his father and lived with him. Both in Norway and in Greenland they heard with surprise, the accounts of Bjarni's journey and the new and attractive countries he had seen. They scoffed at the persevering naval hero being so little inquisitive, and having failed to make himself better acquainted with these countries.

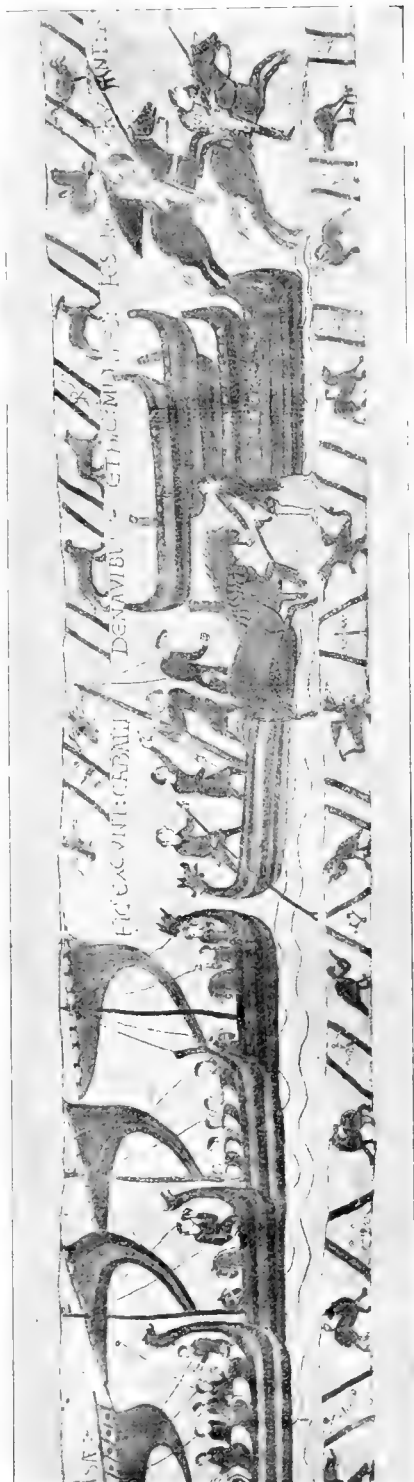
Bjarni's discovery spurred others to exploits, and here four other journeys are mentioned: of Leif Ericsson (the same as we already have heard of in Chapter III), *Thorvald Ericsson*, *Karlsefni* and *Freydis Ericsdottir* (-daughter).

Eric's Saga in the meanwhile knows only of two journeys: *The first about Leif and the other about Karlsefni with Thorvald and Freydis*. It is seen by comparing Eric the Red's Saga and "the book of Flatey" that the same events are the objects of both accounts. GUSTAV STORM's opinion is, that as Bjarni is quite an unknown person, he ought to be omitted from history, to make place for Leif Ericsson, and that Thorvalds and Freydis Eriksdottir's Vineland-campaign should be taken up in the big investigation-expedition which left Greenland in the year 1003 under the command of *Thorfin Karlsefni*.

The Norsemen discovered on this journey, as we shall see, three different countries on the other side of Greenland, which they called "*Helluland*" (Stone country), "*Markland*" (wood country) and "*Vineland*", as it can be seen, the first lies furthest north, the last named furthest south.

One has not been able to decide positively which regions in North America correspond to these countries. Numbers of interpretations have come out, which for Vineland's part has led to very different results such as 59' and 41° n. lat.

The Norwegian professor GUSTAV STORM, thinks that Helluland must be searched in *Labrador*, Markland in *New Foundland* and Vineland not further south than *Nova Scotia*. WILLIAM HØVGAARD, a previous captain in the Danish navy now a professor at the Massachusetts's Institute of Technology, has in a work, which came out in America



Viking-ships from the Bayeux tapestry.  
1. Ship building. 2. Landing.

(photos, from the original)

in 1914 of the voyages to Vineland ("The voyages of the Norsemen to America") given a contribution to the voyages of Vineland's topography. He deals with all the above mentioned journeys, also the Flateyjar-books. We shall in the meantime only abide by *Karlsefni's journey*. Hovgaard thinks that Helluland was the northern part of Labrador or possibly the southern part of Baffin country. He identifies Markland with Labrador's coast on  $56\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  n. Lat. or perhaps further south; and *Straumey* in Vineland, where the expedition, as we shall see, landed and spent the winter, he thinks in *Sandwich Bay*, just south of the sandy coast by Cape Porcupine, which divides it from Hamilton inlet. From here the expeditions which were sent out, probably reached *New Foundland*. Through this, one sees that Vineland ought to lie considerably further north than Gustav Storm meant. Finally, H. P. STEENSBY, Professor in Geography at the university in Copenhagen, has stated a new theory concerning the position of Vineland near St. Lawrence river, which will be published in the "Meddelelser om Grønland", vol. LVI.

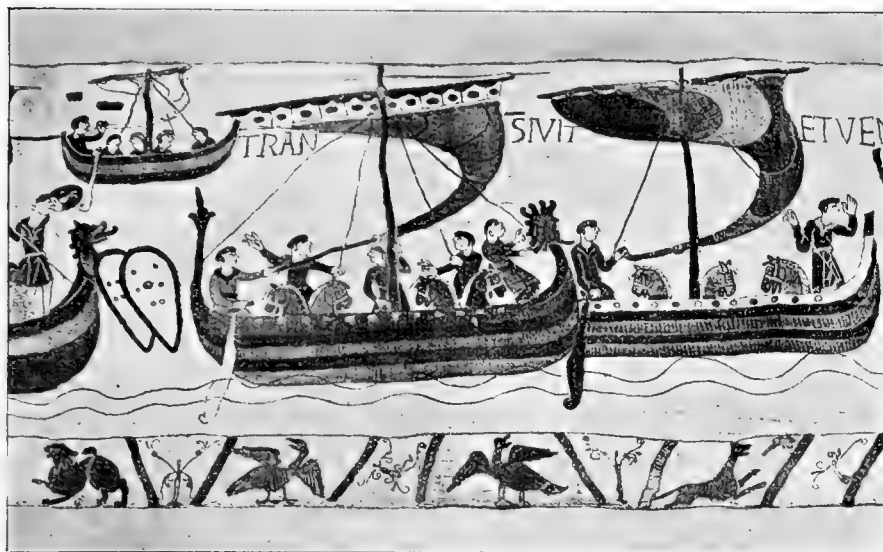
After these remarks of orientation, we will acquaint ourselves with the man who was the leader on the voyage of discovery.

At *Höfði* on *Höfdastrand* (— beach) in Iceland, peasant Thord lived, who was descended from *Ragnar Lodbrók* (R-Shaggy-breeks) and his son *Biörn Jarnsida* (B-Ironside). His grandson's son was called *Thorfin Karlsefni*, of whom, the following is related in Eric's Saga:

"*Thorfin Karlsefni* was a capable sailor and merchant, who went out on commercial travelling. One summer he adjusted his ship, bound for Greenland.

*Snorri Thorbrandsson* from Alptafjord went with him, and there were 40 men on the ship. In the same summer BJARNI GRIMOLFSSON in Breidafjord and THORHALL GAMLISSON from one of the eastern fiords, equipped a ship likewise to sail to Greenland. There were also 40 men on it. As soon as the ships were ready Karlsefni and the others sailed with both of them. — Nothing is related of how long they were at sea; but on the other hand it is told that the ships came to *Eric'sfjord* in the autumn. *Eric* and several of the inhabitants rode down to the ships and began to trade, over which they soon agreed. The shipmasters told Eric to take as much as he wished to of the wares, and he on his side showed them great hospitality, by inviting the two ship's crews to spend the winter with him in *Brattahlid*, where big and good outhouses were not wanting, in which the wares could be laid up, and where there lacked nothing which they otherwise had need of; they were comfortably installed during their winter stay. But towards Yule-tide Eric became more silent and he was evidently not so happy as he was wont to be. Karlsefni seeing an opportunity addressed him and asked:

"Art thou not quite well Eric? It seems to us that thou art not in such good spirits as thou art wont to be; thou hast shown us the greatest bounteousness, and it is our duty to repay thee therefore, with



Viking-ships from the Bayeux tapestry. (photos. from the original)

everything that is in our power to render. Tell me now what art thou troubled about."

Eric answered:

"You are satisfied here, and I am not really afraid that you will be ungrateful, but I am afraid that it will be said when you come elsewhere that you have never spent so poor a Yule-tide as the one now approaching — when Eric the Red entertained you at Bratahlid in Greenland."

"There is no fear of that, Farmer!" said Karlsefni; "in our ships we have both malt, meal and corn; take as much as thou wishest, and make as stately a feast as thou thinkest best!"

Eric accepted the offer, and they made ready for the Yule-feast; and the feast was so stately that people thought they had never seen such magnificence before in a poor country. After the Yule-feast Karlsefni wooed *Gudrid*, as he thought, Eric could dispose of her. Eric accepted the courtship kindly and said that she deserved an honest man and that it would be her fate to marry him, and it ended that he married her. They feasted again as the wedding was held at Brattahlid during the winter.

#### The beginning of the voyages of Vineland.

At *Brattahlid* people began talking much of searching "*Vineland*" ("the good" as it is called in one of the manuscripts) as a journey thither would assuredly repay them on account of the riches of the country. Consequently in the following spring, *Karlsefni* and *Snorri* equipped their ships to search the country. The before-named men *Bjarni* and *Thorhall*, also prepared themselves and their ships. Besides which a man named *Thorvard* who was married to Eric the Red's natural daughter *Freydis*, and Eric's son *Thorvald* were to go with them, also *Thorhall* surnamed "*Veidimadr*" (i. e. Huntsman), who had been a long time with Eric and served him as capturer during the summer and bailiffe during the winter. He was big, strong, and swarthy as a giant but silent and malicious in all he said, always inciting Eric to do the worst. He was a bad Christian, knowing the uninhabited parts well. This man was to be on board the ship with Thorvard and Thorwald, who had the ship *Thorbiörn* had sailed in. There were in all 160 men when they sailed to the western settlement and from there on to Biarney (Bear Isle, now Disko Island?)."

The expedition thus sailed northwards to begin with. There may have been several reasons for this. *Gudrid*'s farm lay in the western settlement and there could be occasion to touch there before the campaign began. But there were other reasons which might have a concurrent motive.

Greenland's most south west coast is in our days, as we have already heard, blocked by ice in the early summer months, sometimes from





Skrællings of to-day, Greenland.

(1-6. D. B. photo.)

Cape Farewell up to 66° n. lat. There is an open canal along the coast, which, as Hovgaard says, Karlsefni could use right up north of the western settlement. Another reason why the expedition went so far towards north and west before steering over Davis straits, possibly was that experience had shown that the wind up here was north and northwest at this time of year, so that one could get a fair wind. Lastly one had, as Storm relates out of Leif's earlier journeys, probably found that there was a shorter stretch from here until one reached land on the other side, the present Baffin's Bay. In short, in these waters both wind and ice, etc. must have encouraged a voyage to Vineland by the route taken.

It is related of the voyage from Greenland:

"They sailed two days to the south". Finnur Jónsson thinks it probably was "5" days. The mistake happened most likely through there having been written "ii" (2) instead of "u" (5).

"When they sighted land they put a boat out to investigate it. They found big "*Hellur*" or flat stones, of which several were 12 ells long; there were numbers of foxes. They named the country and called it *Helluland* (now Labrador?).

They sailed from there for two days and turned off from the south to southwest, and found a country, overgrown with woods, and with many animals in it. An island lay to the southeast of the country: there they killed a bear and called it thereafter *Biarney* (bear island) but the country *Markland*.

From there they sailed further south along the country and came to a headland. The country lay to starboard, and had long sandy stretches of coast. They rowed into land and found on the headland the keel of a boat, wherefore they called it *Kialarness* (i. e. Keelness, keel point, or headland). The sands they called *Furdustrandir* ("the Wonder-strand") as it took such a long time to sail along them. The country was permeated by bays, and they sailed into a creek with the ships.

King Olaf Tryggvason had given Leif two Scotchmen with him (when he sailed home to Greenland, and they were evidently with them on the journey to Vineland); the one was a man named *Haki* and the other a woman called *Hekia*. They were quicker than deer. Karlsefni had them on board, and whilst they sailed past *Furdustrandir* the Scots were put on land with orders to hasten southwards into the country and examine its nature. They had to be back again at the end of three days. They bore the so called "*Kiafal*" (or *Biafal*) costume, with a hat (or hood) at the top. The costume was open at the sides, without sleeves and held together between the legs with a button and a strap; beyond which the Scots were naked.

They remained away according to the time agreed upon, and when they returned the one had a bunch of grapes in his hand and the other an ear of newly sown wheat. They went on board and the journey was continued.



(D. B.)



(Adolf Jensen)



1-3. Kayak-men out capturing.  
Skrællings of to-day, Greenland.

(D. B.)

They steered into a fiord, outside which lay an island: a strong current flowed round it therefore they called it "*Straumey*" (current island). There were so many eiderducks on the island that one could hardly move on account of eggs. They called the fiord "*Straumfiord*" (Stream fiord), there they unloaded the ship's cargo and prepared themselves to remain there; they had all sorts of cattle with them. It was a fair region, and they did nothing except investigate the country. They stayed there during the winter (1003—04) without having provided provisions before-hand. In the summer fishing began to cease, and it was difficult to procure food. THORHALL HUNTSMAN (of whom supernatural things are now told, which rests on superstition) then disappeared. There had been made promises to God so as to be able to get provisions; but they did not come as quickly as they were needed. Thorhal was searched for three days, and they found him on the point of a rock, where he lay staring up into the air; gaping both with his nose and mouth, muttering something at the same time. They asked him why he had gone there; he answered that it did not concern them. They bade him go home with them which he also did. Shortly afterwards a whale came. They went to it and flensed it but none knew what sort it was. The cook cooked the meat and they ate it but they all fell ill. Then Thorhal said:

"More willing to help was the Redbearded (i. e.: Thor) than your Christ; this (i. e. the whale) have I got by my bardship, as I chanted about Thor, my preserver — it is seldom he has disappointed me."

When the others heard this, they cast the whole of the whale into the sea and commended themselves to God. The weather now improved, and they were able to row out fishing, and there was no lack of food, as they could hunt animals on land, collect eggs on the island and catch fish in the sea."

The Scotch runners had brought an ear of corn and grapes; one knew therefore that one was in the neighbourhood of that "Vineland" which Leif had found. The question was whether one should search it to the south or north.

#### "About Karlsefni and Thorhall.

It is narrated, that *Thorhall* would now go northwards along Furdustrands to search Vineland, but *Karlsefni* would go south along the coast. Thorhall made his preparations out amidst the islands. They were in all only nine men. The rest of the crew went with Karlsefni.

When Thorhall went on board, he drank and chanted:

"The men said, when I came here,  
that I should get the best drink;  
I can justly blame the country for all;



(D. B.)



(W. Thalbitzer)



1-3. "Umiak's" on summer expeditions.  
Skrællings of to-day, Greenland.

(D. B.)

I'll be obliged to swing the (water) pail,  
 there came not a drop of wine to my lips.  
 On the contrary I must  
 creep down to the spring."

When they were ready they sailed, but Thorhal chanted:

"Let us travel back  
 where our countrymen are,  
 let us let the ship plough  
 the broad sea,  
 whilst the unwearied warriors  
 who praise the country here,  
 settle on Furdustrand  
 and cook their whale."

Then they sailed to the north passed Furdustrands and Kialarness and would cross to the west, passed the coast, a strong western wind rose then against them, and drove them to Ireland, there they were overcome and made thralls, and there Thorhall died — according to what merchants have related."

In other words the ship was driven straight across the Atlantic ocean, to be shipwrecked on the Irish coast; something similar happened, as we shall learn, to other partakers of the expedition.

"It is stated in the meanwhile that *Karlsefni* together with *Snorri* and *Bjarni* besides their folk went southwards along the coast of the land. They sailed a long time, until they came to a river, which came out from land, flowing out into the sea through a lake. The banks of the river were flat and broad, and one could reach the river only at high-tide. *Karlsefni* sailed into the mouth with his crew, and they called the place *Hôp*.

They found here on the land selfsowing wheatfields, there where the earth was swampy and flat, but vines where the land lay higher (i. e. where it became undulated). Every brook was full of fish. They dug holes at the highwater mark, and when the water fell there were halibuts in the holes. In the woods there were countless animals of every description.

Here they remained for two weeks (in the summer 1004) amused themselves without anything special happening.

They had cattle with them. Early one morning on looking round, they discovered a number of boats made of skins, from which poles were swung, and it sounded like wind in a bundle of straw, the swinging went round with the sun. Then *Karlsefni* exclaimed:

"What signifies this?"

*Snorri Thorbrandsson* answered:

"It is perhaps a sign of peace, let us take a white shield and hold it up before them."

They did so. Now the strangers rowed nearer, and marvelling at



### Skrællings of to-day, Greenland.

1. Iceberg at Jacobshavn. 2. Summer tent (P. Vibæk). 3. Up the bird cliffs (D. B.). 4. The chatching of Angmagssat's (John Moller). 6. Winter houses, the roof of which is removed during the summer, to disinfect them by the sun (D. B.). 6. A kayak being lifted over the edge of the ice (D. B.).

those they found here, they landed. These people were small, having a severe appearance, coarse hair, big eyes and broad cheeks.

For a time they stood there looking at the strangers, then they rowed away southwards round the headland.

Karlsefni and his people had raised their booths above the lake, some of the houses lay near the lake others further away. They remained here during the winter (1004—05). No snow came, and all their cattle grazed in freedom on the pasturages.

When the spring (1005) set in, they saw early one morning a number of skin-boats come rowing round the headland from the south. There were so many that it looked as if the opening of the creek was covered with charcoal. A pole was swung from each boat. Karlsefni and his people held their shields up in the air, and when the two parties had approached each other, they began to trade. These people preferred having red cloth, giving leather wares and genuine grey furs in exchange.

They also wished to buy swords and spears, but Karlsefni and Snorri would not let them have them. For a whole grey fur the Skrællings took a span of red cloth, which they wound round their heads.

In this manner they traded for some time, until Karlsefni and his people began to be short of cloth, therefore they cut that which was left into small pieces, which were not broader than a finger, and the Skrællings gave as much for them as they did before — or even more.

It happened that a bull, belonging to Karlsefni, came running out of the wood, bellowing. This frightened the Skrællings, who hastened out to their skin-boats, and rowed southwards along the coast.

One saw nothing of them for three weeks. But then there came a great number of Skrælling-boats from the south, — row upon row, each swinging their pole and howling loudly. Karlsefni now held a red shield towards them. The Skrællings hastened out of their boats; they rushed at each other and fought. Shot rained down as the Skrællings had “slings”. Karlsefni’s people saw that they raised a pole to which a big ball resembling mostly the belly of a sheep was attached; it was of a bluish colour. They swung the pole and the ball flew up on land over Karlsefni’s men. When it fell it gave a hideous crack. It struck Karlsefni and his people with terror so that they only thought of flight. As they retreated along the river, it seemed to them the Skrællings advanced from all quarters. They first paused on reaching some rocks, where they made a strong stand.

*Freydis* came out, and when she saw that Karlsefni’s men were retreating she cried:

“Why do you run away — you brave men — from these poor creatures, whom I thought you could slay like cattle, if I had weapons I believe I could fight better than any of you.”

They paid no attention to her words. *Freydis* would go with them but as she was pregnant she could not go so fast. She followed them



into the woods; but the Skrællings pursued her. She found a dead man who proved to be *Thorbrand Snorrason*. A flat stone stuck firmly in his head, and his naked sword lay by his side. She took it up and put herself in a posture of defence. When the Skrællings reached her she bared her breasts, spreading them on the shining sword. At this the Skrællings became frightened escaped to their boats and rowed away. Karlsefni and his men now came back again and praised her success. Two of Karlsefni's men fell, but a number of Skrællings.

Karlsefni's troupe had to do with a very superior number of enemies; they now went home to their dwellings, dressed their wounds, and first now began to think over what it could have been, that which advanced against them, coming up from the country, and they perceived that it had only been real people who came from the boats, and what they otherwise had seen must have been an optical illusion.

The Skrællings also found a dead man by whose side there lay an axe. One of them took it up and cut into a tree with it; whereon one after another did the same; they found it a valuable thing and that it cut well. At last one of them took the axe and cut into a stone with it so that it (the axe) broke. Now they threw it away as it seemed useless to them not being able to resist stone.

Karlsefni and his people now comprehended that although the country had many advantages, one would live in constant fear of being disturbed by the country's native inhabitants. Therefore they prepared to leave so as to reach their own home-stead. They sailed northward, along the coast, and met near the sea five Skrællings who slept in their fur coats. They had a casket with them in which there was animal's marrow mixed with blood.

Karlsefni and his men imagined that these people were banished from their own country so they killed them.

Later they came to a headland, on which there were many animals, and the headland was covered with dung because the animals lay there during the night; they had now returned to Straumfiord and there was a superabundance of all that they needed.

Some people say that *Bjarni* and *Gudrid* remained there with 100 men, whilst Karlsefni and 40 men travelled southwards, having hardly been two months in the "Hóp" after which they returned during the same summer.

*Karlsefni* thereafter sailed away to search hunter *Thorhall*, whilst the others remained behind. They sailed northwards past *Kialarness*, and were driven in a western direction with land on their left hand. Everywhere were deserted woods, as far as one could see with hardly any opening in them.

When they had sailed for a long time a river ran down from the country, it flowed from east to west, they lay to in the mouth of the river, on the southern bank.

### The death of Thorvald Ericsson.

It happened one morning that Karlsefni and his men saw a shining spot on the other side of a glade in the wood and they began calling in that direction. Something moved — it was a “one-footed” who ran quickly to the river bank where the Greenlanders lay. Eric the Red’s son *Thorvald* sat at the helm, the one-footed shot an arrow into his bowels. Thorvald drew the arrow out, exclaiming:

“Well is my suet fat and the country fertile that we have reached, but little shall we benefit by it.”

Shortly after Thorvald died of his wound. But the one-footed ran away again northwards. Karlsefni and his men followed, seeing him from time to time. The last time they saw him he sprang into a creek; they then returned again. A man chanted this little poem:

“People pursued  
(very true it was)  
a “one-footed”  
down to the shore  
but the strange man  
hastening rushed,  
the arrogant one.  
Hearest thou Karlsefni”.

They left going north, as they thought this to be “the land of the one-footed.” They would not expose their men any longer.

Their opinion was that the mountain range they had seen in Hôp, and the one they found here were one and the same stretching equal distances on each side of Straumfjord.

The third winter (1005—06) they spent in Straumfjord. They divided into several quarreling consignments; the women being the cause, as the unmarried men would wrong the married ones, whereat disturbances arose (Flatey-book relates that Freydis, caused trouble on the above mentioned journey, — it possibly refers to this). In the next autumn Karlsefni’s son *Snorri* was born here, and he was three years old when they left. When they sailed from *Vineland*, a southern wind was blowing. They came to *Markland*, where they met 5 Skrællings the one of whom was bearded, two women, and two children. They captured the boys, but the others escaped, and the Skrællings sank into the earth (disappeared perhaps into their earth houses?). They took the two boys with them; they were taught the language and they were christened. They called their mother *Væthildi* and their father *Uvægi*. They said that two kings reigned over the Skrællings, the one was called *Avalldamon*, and the other *Valldidida*, also that there were no houses. People lived in grottos or caves (earth houses?). They said that there was a country opposite to theirs, where people lived who were dressed in white clothes and carried a pole before them to which a piece of stuff



### Skrællings of to-day, Greenland.

1—2. Night-quarters under an «Umiak» (D. B.). 3. The native priest celebrating divine service on the capturing ground (D. B.). 4. Cooking (D. B.). 5. Salmon-fishing with nets (D. B.).

was fastened, and they shouted loudly, and the people believed that it was *Hvitramannaland* (i.e. the white men's land) or the big Ireland."

This account has been interpreted as if white men had discovered and inhabited America long before the Greenlander's journeys to Vineland, which is undoubtedly a mistake. National songs and poems have evidently had influence on the composition of the saga, so that one has confounded America with western Europe. Although many scholars have discussed this question, it is to this day an unsolved riddle. That Greenlanders have thought Skrællings in Greenland and Skrællings in Vineland to be the same sort of people is easily explained. Besides it is incredible, that, Thorfinn Karlsefni and his men should ever have seen Skrællings in Greenland where, when Eric the Red came it was only told that there were traces of their having lived there. The comparison is of a later date. The name Skrællings is already found, as we have heard in Ari Frodi's book, but the signification is indistinct. It is connected both to "Skraal" (roar) and "Skrá" (leather patch), since the latter should either allude to the Skrællings costume or to their (wrinkled) skin. WILLIAM THALBITZER's opinion is\*) that the word "Skrælling" is rather an imitation of the Eskimoe word "*Karalek*". In Greenland the last mentioned name is certainly only preserved as a name of a tribe for the south Greenlander and central Greenlander, but the name seems to have been known in olden times far beyond the boundaries of Greenland.

Eskimoos in Labrador already knew the name *Karalek*, when the first missionaries about 1760 came to them from Greenland.

Thalbitzer has furthermore shown in his book on the Eskimoe language, certain linguistic resemblances between west Greenlander — especially central and south Greenlander's — dialect and that spoken by the Labrador Eskimoos. The name *Karalek* has in all probability in the time of the Vineland travellers existed on the coast of Labrador, "and Thorfinn Karlsefni's two captives *can* or shall I say *must* have known this old Eskimoe national name."

Thalbitzer also gives an explanation of the four names (or words, which Karlsefni and his men took for names) which are stated in the saga, when the two Skrælling-boys mentioned, were captured. It is ingenious and natural and bears evidence in favour of the interpretation of the Skrællings in Vineland as Eskimoos.

The saga's record of the vegetation in Vineland has given reason to many inquires and surmises. There can be no doubt as to the wild uncultivated grapes thriving in North America. Storm certifies that nearly all travellers in the 16th century mention them. The *vine*'s northern boundaries were in the center of the country on 47° n. lat. they did not extend as far as the east coast. With regards to the *wheat* one has (Schübeler,

\* Skrællings in Markand and Greenland (ref. to the bibliography).

Storm) supposed that "wild rice" was meant, or the American "Indian rice." Others (the American botanist M. L. Fernald) are of the opinion, that the wheat is identical with the sand-oats or the Icelandic "melr;" but Finnur Jónsson thinks this quite incorrect. Melr (*elymus arenarius*) has been so called and known by Icelanders since the 10th century; finally some have thought that it was a question of maize, but this cannot be right.

There is no doubt as to what *Masur* (*mösurr*) is, it was a sort of birch-tree which Icelanders knew well or could have known from Norway.

One thing as yet shall be mentioned, that the so called *Lacrosse-ball-game*, has been pointed out as a connection between the Indians and the Norsemen. It is said from the Icelandic side (Björn Bjarnarson and Finnur Jónsson) that this ball-game has no great resemblance to the old Icelandic "*Knattleikr*."

We will now give the conclusion of the Vineland journey in Eric the Red's saga:

"*Bjarni Grimolfsson* was driven to the "worm sea", (so called because the sea worms had taken hold of the ship and caused its destruction), or the Irish sea, and the ship began to sink under them. They had a boat which was smeared with seal tar, such as the sea worms do not attack. They got into the boat but saw that it could not carry them all. So Bjarni said:

"As the boat cannot hold half of our men, I advise that we cast lots as to who shall go into the boat, without respect of persons. All thought it such a high-minded offer that none were against it. They cast lots, and it fell to the lot of Bjarni and half of the crew to go into the boat, as it could not hold more."

When they were in it an Icelander said, who was amongst them who remained behind on the ship, and who had accompanied Bjarni from Iceland:

"Intendest thou, Bjarni, to leave me here"?

"It must be so," answered Bjarni.

"Thou didst promise my father otherwise, when I left Iceland with thee, than that thou wouldst forsake me — thou saidst that we should meet with the same fate."

To which Bjarni answered:

"Then it shall not be so. Come thou into the boat and I will go on-board the ship, as I see thou art so covetous of living."

Bjarni went on board and the man into the boat, and they continued the journey until they reached *Dublin* in Ireland, where they related what had taken place. Most people think that Bjarni and his companions died in the worm sea, as one has never since heard of them.

#### **Karlsefni and his wife Gudrid's offspring.**

The second summer after (1008) *Karlsefni* went to Iceland, *Gudrid* went with him, and he went home to Reynisness. When

his mother saw what an excellent woman Gudrid was she allowed her to come to her home, and they were good friends. *Snorri Karlsefnis'son's* daughter was called *Halfrid*, the mother of Bishop *Thorlak Runolfsson*. (The race was intelligent and flourished for a long time).

Many other big people in Iceland descend from Karlsefni and Gudrid, who are not noted here."

With this the tale of the *Vineland voyages* is finished and from now on one hears nothing certain of Vineland.

It is believed that in Norway there has been a Runic inscription, the so-called "*Hønen-Indskrift*" (H-inscription), in which a Vineland journey should be mentioned; but it has disappeared, and the unreliable information and conditions under which they were delivered show that one ought not to rely on it — as Finnur Jónsson says.

Lastly a journey shall be mentioned, the aim of which had been Vineland.

The *annals of Iceland* relate, as before hinted, that in the year 1121 Bishop *Eric Gnupsson* searched (or went out to search) Vineland, which presupposes that Vineland was known beforehand. According to the terms one had evidently neither travelled in the country nor heard of it for a long time. Probably the journey was carried into effect so as to spread Christianity amongst the Skrællings; but nothing is reported of this; and one hears nothing of the results, so it must be gathered that the bishop perished on the journey.

The Icelandic information does not later mention anything reliable concerning the attempt of colonization in Vineland. But there is all-the-same a possibility of there having been intercourse with the discovered countries.

It is stated in the annals of the "Flatey book" in the year 1347:

"A ship came from Greenland. It had sailed to Markland and there were 18 men on board."

The same event is related in the following manner in the oldest *annals of Skalholt*:

"There also came a ship from Greenland, it was smaller than the small Icelandic commercial ships. They came into the outmost Straumfiord (Streamfiord in Iceland). It had no anker. There were 17 men on board, and they had sailed to Markland but were later driven here by a storm at sea."

The memorial of the Vineland journeys are well preserved in Greenland and Iceland; there is no proof of the supposition that *Columbus* who sailed in the Icelandic waters in the year 1476, should have heard anything of the discovery having taken place. The Norsemen's discovery of Vineland had hardly any influence on the discovery of America in 1492.



Icebergs in a fiord  
(Eastern settlement.)

(Froda 1894).

## Chapter V.

### Thorgils Örrabeinsfostri's Greenland journey.

**E***ric the Red* still lived on his chieftain seat Brattahlid in Ericsfiord, where in his old age he could rejoice at the progress the northern colonists in Greenland, had made. Here he enjoyed the high esteem of all, being influential in all matters, his home being likewise the goal for many Icelanders journeys, whom the rumour of his splendid life-work had reached and filled with admiration.

The great Vineland journey had not yet ended, Karlsefni and his men had not returned, when Eric the Red was visited by an Icelandic chief *Thorgils Örrabeinsfostri*, an old friend and a capable seaman, who already, at a young age, had commanded a Viking ship for *Hacon Earl* in Norway, where, as we have heard, he got to know Eric in his early youth.

The tale of Thorgils journey to Greenland is described in *Floamanna saga*, it was evidently filled with so many adventures that it is difficult to find the pith of it. There is however so much that proves that Thorgils is a real historical person, that we cannot omit it.

Thorgils had emigrated from Norway to Iceland, where he established himself. Eric the Red had in the meantime invited him to Greenland, and the delight of adventure urged him on. He equipped a ship, sold his estate and persuaded his wife *Thorey* to accompany him. He took besides, his bailiff *Thorarin* and his thralls, with him, and several others joined them. Thorgils had just become a Christian, probably since Christianity in the year 1000 had been accepted by law in Iceland.

The new belief could not have been very secure in the old heathen's soul, and it is said that Thorgils had many anxieties and warnings before his departure concerning the result of his project. Thor appeared before him in dreams and tried to persuade him to return to his old belief, by threatening him with difficulties, and the same thing took place several times on the journey.

They had hardly lost sight of Iceland when a storm rose against them, and they drifted about the whole summer, — probably the year after Christianity's introduction, therefore in the year 1001 — until they stranded, in the autumn, high up on Greenland's east coast, in the middle of the polar ice. The ship sank, but the people saved themselves in a boat, the greatest part of their cattle perished at the same time. They had time to save some flour, but otherwise they were obliged to support life as best they could, on this inhospitable coast, namely by capturing seals and fishing, but towards winter food became scarce. They built a big winter hut with a board-partition, and here Thorey gave birth to a son. Here the afflictions are related, which the travellers had to suffer. After the thralls, belonging to the fellow-traveller's household, had wildly celebrated Yule-tide with all sorts of heathen and superstitious games, consumption broke out amongst them, and by degrees they all died, so that in the beginning of spring (1002?) there were none of them alive. The survivors found the situation hopeless, they were terrified lest the ghosts of the thralls would appear, therefore Thorgils bid the bodies be collected and burnt. In the meantime the tightly packed ice along the coast hindered them in getting away. The summer passed with the collecting of food, and they got through the following winter (1002—03). But the ice was still hard in the spring (1003). Thorgils' wife was very anxious as to how it would end, and she begged her husband to do everything in his power to get away. One day when the weather was fine he went up onto the glacier so as to look out to sea and see whether the ice had begun to loosen. He was accompanied by three men, he had given his thralls orders to go out fishing, whilst they were away, only Thorarin was to remain behind with Thorey who was ill.

During the afternoon, when Thorgils was on his way back from the mountains a bad snow-storm set in, but he found his way home. He now saw that the boat was gone, and when he reached the house, it appeared that both people, clothes and provisions were gone.

"There is something wrong here!" He went further into the hut heard a rattling sound, and found Thorey lying dead in her bed, whilst the child lay suckling its mother's breast. It was soon seen that the faithless Thorarin and the thralls had killed her, after which they had made their escape in the boats with all the provisions. Thorgils was deeply grieved, and the thought of how he should save his child brought him to desperation. It is now told, how in his misery he cut his own nipple and let





An "Umiak" rowing towards Cape Farewell. (W. Thalbitzer 1914)



(photo.)

Eskimoes from Angmagssalik in east Greenland, standing before their winter house.  
The light patches are window-openings with gut-skin panes.

the child suck. Blood came first, then a mixed fluid and finally milk — and with that the boy was fed. He and his three men went eagerly out fishing so as to procure food for themselves, and they began to build a boat of skins and wood-work.

We now come to the most remarkable part of the saga namely the meeting with the gnomes (Eskimoos?) living on Greenland's *east coast*

It is easily understood that Norsemen, in whose conception gnomes, giants and such like lived, at the first meeting with polar folk must have been tempted to refer them to the preternatural world — and even if the saga is comparatively new (from about 1300) there is little doubt as to its original contents speaking the truth, when it states Thorgils meeting with such people.

One morning Thorgils was alone on the ice and he found a big sea animal driven up into an opening in the ice and two witches stood beside it tying big bundles of meat together. Thorgils who evidently was overcome by the unexpected sight, ran towards them and with his sword, cut the hand off one of them, and she dropped the bundle, and they both ran away.

Thorgils and his men now collected enough food from the animal, — and as the ice at last began to loosen from land they boarded their fragile vessel and left that terrible place of residence.

That summer they reached a place called Seal-Point where they remained the following or third winter (1003—04). During the summer they went further — fighting a terrible hunger — past glaciers and steep coasts. In one place, where they had raised their tent, the boat disappeared, which brought Thorgils to such desperation, that he even thought of killing his son; but the boat, which had probably been stolen by Eskimoos was brought back to them again, and as Thorgils now killed a bear and divided its flesh into economical rations, life could be supported.

The journey was continued, past many inlets and fiords, — along the south eastern part of Greenland's east coast, the coast GRAAH and later HOLM and GARDE passed in our days, and whose descriptions show that the saga cannot altogether be fancy with regard to the description of the country.

At last the shipwrecked saw a raised canvas tent, here they found Thorarin and with him the escaped thralls. Thorarin tried to excuse his deed by pretending that he had been driven to it by the thralls who had threatened him with death. He was killed and buried in the same place.

Slowly the shipwrecked worked their way towards the southern point of Greenland. It was near the end of the third year of their stay on the eastern coast, and autumn was drawing near. They now approached inhabited parts, and although — as we now know — there were no real farms on the east coast; but inconspicuous ruins have however been found there testifying that a few men, who either had been declared



(G. Amdrup <sup>22</sup> 1900).  
From Greenland's desolate east coast (Cape Hildebrandt).



An Eskimoe "Umiak" on Greenland's east coast (Angmagssalik). (photo.)

outlaw, or who were here to capture and fish, had had a temporary residence here.

Such a man, by name ROLF, had a little dwelling here. Therefore unexpectedly Thorgils and his companions found a ship or boat-house and a dwelling-house here. He was received kindly and spent the winter with Rolf (1004—05). The child, who was here left to the care of the women, thrived well.

When spring approached, Rolf gave them a ship, on which they reached *Brattahlid* during the summer. If Thorgils had expected to be received in the best way by his old friend Eric he was doomed to suffer a great disappointment:

"Eric received Thorgils somewhat coolly, and his treatment was less careful than had been expected. Thorgils discovered that the thralls were in the country but pretended not to know it. During the winter it happened that a bear often attacked the inhabitants' cattle, doing great damage. One day people came to Thorgils to trade with him, and great numbers were collected in the isolated stock-houses, where the wares were to be found. Thorfin was also present. He said to Thorgils:

"Father! there is a big beautiful dog out there." Thorgils answered:

"Do not worry about that, only do not go outside."

Notwithstanding the boy ran out, where he was met by a bear and immediately thrown down. The boy shouted loudly. Thorgils sprang out of the earthhouse sword in hand. The animal was then playing with the boy. Thorgils struck the bear between the ears and split its head, so that it fell down dead, after which he immediately grasped the child, who had only suffered slight injury.

Through this deed Thorgils became very famous, and they thought great good fortune had come to him.

ERIC was not very pleased with this deed; but allowed the animal to be prepared, some even say, that he — according to ancient custom — had paid the animal a sort of cult.

Here it is told, that once several men sat during the winter in the "*Badstofa*" (bathing room) at *Brattahlid*, not all at the same time, as some stood in front of the house. Amongst them were *Kol* and *Starkad*.

The subject of conversation was the comparison of different people with each other; they especially meant Thorgils and Eric. Kol said that Thorgils had accomplished many deeds of valour. To which a man, called HALL, out of Eric's household, answered:

"The comparison is unequal, as Eric is a great and celebrated chief, but this Thorgils has lived in misery and thralldom, and I am not quite sure as to his being man or woman." (He here evidently refers to the saga's story of his having suckled his child.) Kol answered: "What sayest thou, thou miserable wretch!" at which he pierced him with his spear so that he died at once. Eric bade his men rise and seize Kol, but all the traders ran to defend him.

Then Thorgils said:

"It is thy duty Eric, thyself to revenge the death of thy man."

The friends of both now interposed. They perceived besides that it would not be easy to overpower the strangers.

The parties were reconciled agreeing that Thorgils and Eric should settle the affair between themselves. They both agreed to the decision but from that time on their friendship cooled so that Thorgils thought much of leaving. It also happened that winter that some robbers did great damage to people. Their leaders' name was *Thorstein*, and they were 30 men in all, who were pronounced outlaws. The inhabitants suffered great loss through their theft, and they complained to Eric. The robbers had their resort on some islands in Ericsfiord. Eric complained of it to Thorgils and begged his assistance. Thorgils answered, that he had not come to Greenland to risk his life against villains, and that he had suffered much for Eric's sake. But he could not persuade himself to refuse to join the campaign, as the people in the country were in need, therefore he declared himself ready if Eric himself went with them — but he would first arrange his own affairs.

"Hold thyself in readiness, until I send thee a message."

Thereafter Thorgils and his people went on board his ship so as to visit the western settlement, the inhabitants of which had not yet paid him the duty on the bear [for the bear he had killed].

Thorgils now succeeded in having Rolf declared inviolate."

In the Vestribygd (western settlement) Thorgils conquered and killed a band of robbers who had resort on the island, through which he gained great favour; an estate as well as the duty on the bear was demanded. But Eric would have nothing more to do with him. Thorgils had sent for him, but Eric did not go as he had promised. Then Thorgils said:

"Now I think I can rightly see through Eric's heart. He intends inciting us against these people and imagines that we could not bare returning without discharging the case even if he does not come himself."

So Thorgils managed by himself, killed the robbers and conquered his former thralls, whom he sold; but:

"Thorgils was by no means satisfied with Eric."

He now left Greenland, and came — after having exhibited manly conduct in Norway — back again to Iceland, where he again took possession of his property, and married once more. At the age of 85 he died highly esteemed.

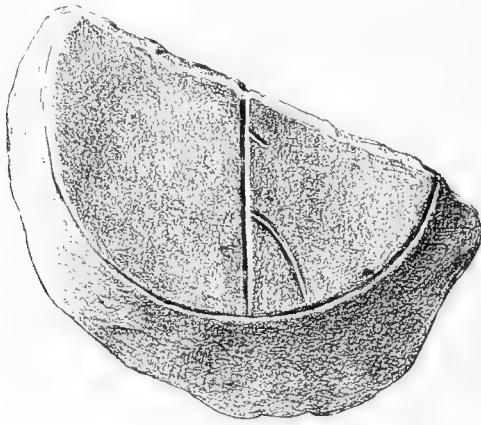
The saga says about him:

"Thorgils was considered an excellent man, he was favourably disposed, and faithful to freinds, persevering and strong, very active and disinclined to offend others, although he never allowed himself to give way to others, even if he had highly esteemed and strong men to deal with. He was considered a splendid chief, impartial and

intelligent, brave but very unforbearing towards those who did not behave well. He was faithful and devout, God-fearing and kind towards his friends. Also many people of rank descend from him, and his progeny is widely spread over our country. Now we will, for the present, stop relating about Thorgils, Örrabeins foster-son — and with that the Saga is ended."

*Eric the Red* died very soon after the Vineland journeys ended, and his son *Leif* inherited the chieftain seat Brattahlid. He died about 1021, after which his son THORKEL succeeded him.

Greenland, in the following period, was possibly the scene of contentions and manslaughter, caused by the revenge of bloodshed, so that even whole families were ruined, which inevitably weakened the colonies. In *Fostbrædra Saga* (the fosterbrother saga) and in the remarkable poem of *Skald-helgi* (bard Helgi) Greenland's "lögmaðr" (lawman), we have the means of understanding these conditions, although the authenticity of these literary productions must be doubted. But on the whole they evidently give true pictures of the conditions in Greenland for which they are of great value.





(N. P. Jorgensen 1894)

A view across Tunugdliarfíki (Eric'sfiord)  
to Igaliko-tongue (The »Eid«), behind which the inner end of  
Igalikofíki (Einar'sfiord) is seen.

## Chapter VI.

### The foster-brothers.

**T**hormod Kolbrúnarskáld (bard) and Thorgeir Hávarsson were celebrated foster-brothers, whose achievements are related in the "*Fostbrædra-Saga*" (the foster-brother-saga), which partly are based on Thormod's verses, as he was a celebrated bard, whose personal achievements caused his name to be renowned.

In conjunction the two foster-brothers, at an early age, committed man-slaughter and many violences, especially in the region of the innermost part of Isafiord on Iceland's north-western peninsula. Thorgeir was not a sympathetic person, but — as Finnur Jónsson says — in possession of a never failing courage, and headman for all the violences done by them both. He had great influence over bard Thormod who was very winning and of a mild disposition; and in reality it was Thorgeir who drove Thormod to bloody deeds. At last the foster-brothers separated, because Thorgeir — very characteristic for him — began to grumble, saying they ought to settle between themselves who was the strongest and most courageous fighter.

At all events they quarrelled. Thorgeir travelled abroad, and Thormod went home to his father. With his sensitive nature, it will not be astonishing to hear that he was implicated in some love-affairs. He composed a love-song about a black-browed beauty, *Thorbiorg*, which is now lost.

Although misunderstandings and embellishments have crept into

the original saga edition (from about the year 1200) the tale of Thormod's doings in Greenland are very interesting, and they give an excellent picture of the revenge of bloodshed, and the state of culture in Greenland shortly after the death of Eric the Red.

We meet here in Einarsfiord at the farm *Lönguness* chieftain *Thorgrim Einarsson Trolle*, who, next to *Thorkel Leifsson* at *Brattahlid* was the most powerful man in the eastern settlement, having many people under him. He was evidently one of the Godes and a member of the law-courts at Gardar-thing (assize).

In the year 1022 he went on a commercial journey to Norway, Denmark, and England, in which countries he gained great riches. On the journey home he touched Iceland, where he attacked and killed *Thorgeir Havarsson*, whose ship he seized and took along with him to Greenland.

When Thormod received the news of his foster-brother's death, he immediately decided to be revenged. First he went to Norway, to King *Olaf* who seems to have been interested in Thormod's plan of travelling to Greenland so as to carry out his revenge. A Greenlander by the name of *Skuf* was there at the time with his ship ready to leave for home. Thormod bargained himself onboard, and took leave of King *Olaf* who on this occasion gave him a sword and a gold ring, likewise giving him an introduction to *Thorkel Leifsson*.

After many misfortunes, they reached Ericsfiord late in the autumn, and Thormod was well received at *Brattahlid*. He remained in Greenland for three years (1024—27). *Skuf* lived on the other side of the fiord on his farm (*Stokkaness*) opposite *Battahlid*. A man named *Biarni* lived with him, a clever and kindly man, capable and skilful in many ways. They had developed a strong friendship and got on well together. *Gest*, a man *Skuf* had taken with him from Norway, stayed with farmer *Thorgrim* at his farm *Vík* (in the neighbourhood of *Gardar*) in Einarsfiord (refer to page 91).

*Thorgrim Trolle* lived at *Lönguness* with his widowed sister *Thordis* and her four sons: *Bödvar*, *Falgeir*, *Thorkel* and *Thord* all of them active and brave men. *Thorun*, another sister of *Thorgrim Trolle*, also lived in Einarsfiord on the farm *Langaness* (which lay either in the neighbourhood of *Lönguness* or perhaps was even the farm itself — as the resemblance of names is striking) with her son *Líot* a restless person. On the farm *Hamar* (in the eastfiord now *Igalikofíord's* eastern arm) *Sigríð* lived with her son *Síгурð* an active, peaceful, and kindly man. At *Brattahlid* in Ericsfiord, where Thormod was a guest, there was a steward or slave called *Lodín* who lived with a woman named *Sigríð* who was told to care for Thormod.

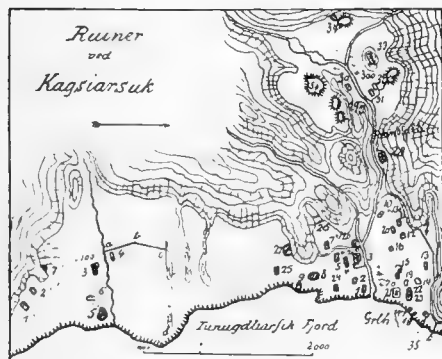
*Thorkel* and his guests slept in a building which had no connection with the rest of the houses [*Thorkel* therefore can hardly have been married], and where a light burned every night, but the rest of his people





(D. B. 1894)

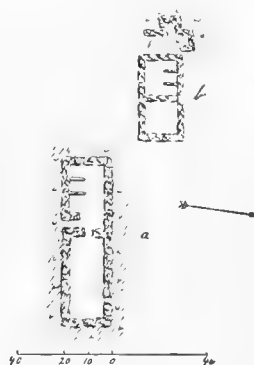
Part of the dwelling house. The entrance door (inside).



a

(D. B. 1894)

a map sketch (in Danish ells).



(D. B. 1894)

Horse stables with haylofts.

## The farm Brattahlid (now Kagssiarssuk).

(Danish feet).

On an even sloping ground nearest the coast lie a crowd of buildings on each side of a river. South of the river stands the dwelling-house (No. 3). To the north of the river the church (21). The stables are near the coast, and higher up on the mountains near a lake, there are many folds. A small farm lies at about one km. to the south of the main farm (a).

slept on the farm itself. Lodin now thought that Sigrid was too long a time at the sleeping house in the evening and he thought of what is said of such disolute women, that:

of rolling wheels  
their hearts were made,  
Falsness lives in their breast.

He now forbade her to remain there such a long time in the evening, she answered in a manner best suited to her.

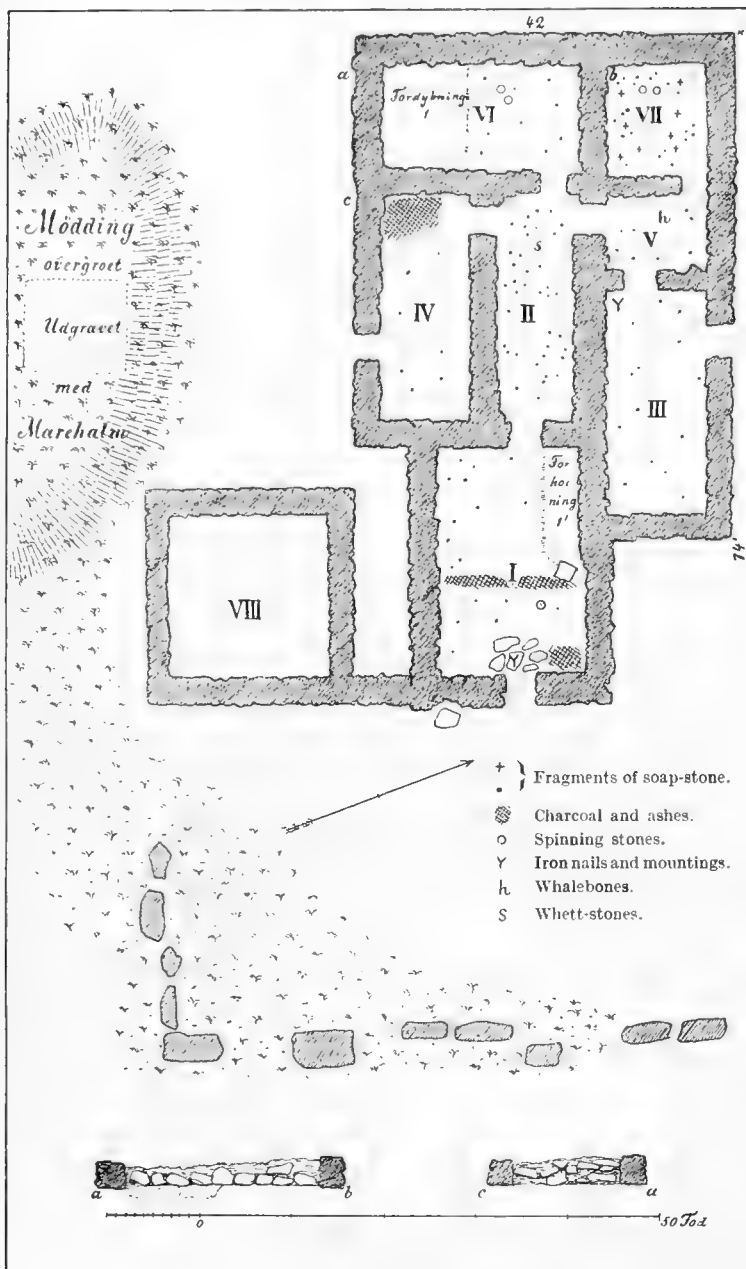
One evening Lodin tried to stop her, as she, Thormod and Thorkel went to the sleeping-house. The last mentioned said to Lodin that he need not be afraid, as he (Thorkel) would take care of her.

As time wore on towards Yule Thorkel brewed ale, as he intended having such a Yule feast that it would be renowned, as it so seldom took place in Greenland. He invited his friends for Yule and many people came. Skuf from Stokkaness and Biarni were also there, they had lent Thorkel tapestries (to hang on the walls) and drinking vessels and the like for the feast. During Yule-tide drinking-bouts were held, with great joy and merriment. When Yule was over they prepared to depart. Lodin gave people their clothes, swords and hand-weapons again, which he had taken charge of; he also set Skufs and Biarni's boat out and the men carried their vessels and clothes down to it. Lodin had a peasant's coat on and trousers of seal-skin. He now went as fourth into the room. Here he only found Thormod and Biarni. Thormod lay foremost on the couch. LODIN and his companions now took Thormod by the feet and jerked him onto the floor and dragged him along it. Biarni sprang up, grasped Lodin round the waist and threw him down on the floor, hard, cursing them who dragged Thormod, and ordered them to let him go — which they did.

Thormod now stood up and remarked to Biarni: "We Icelanders do not mind such a jest as we have so often tried that sort in "Skinn-leik"" (a sort of game).

They went out as if nothing unusual had happened. When Skuf and his travelling-companions were ready to depart, Thorkel and his household accompanied him to the ship. They had a boat which lay ready by a bridge. Biarni stood by the boat and waited for Skuf who was talking to Thorkel. Lodin, who had delivered people their clothes, stood on land, not far from the boat. Thormod was also present. — When one least expected it he swung an axe, which he had hidden under his cloak, and struck Lodin's head in such a manner that he fell dead to the earth.

Thorkel heard the crash and saw immediately that Lodin had fallen. He directly gave his men orders to fall upon Thormod and kill him but they tarried. Biarni now said to Thormod that he should get into the boat, which he also did. Biarni followed him and Skuf likewise,



(D. B. 1894)

The farm Brattahlid (now Kagssiarssuk).

GROUND-PLAN OF THE DWELLING-HOUSE (in Danish feet).

I a room (stofa); II a passage; III a room with an entrance door; IV kitchen (eldhúsi); V Larder (búri); VI possibly a "Skáli" with a sleeping platform (= Forhøjning); VII Seems to have contained a weave; VIII "Skemma" (?). Excavated = Udgravet.

Refuse-heap overgrown with lyme-grass = Mödding övergroet med Marehalm.

(refer to the map page 83.)

after which they drew the gangway in. Thorkel goaded his people on to attack, as it was his intention to fight Skuf and his companions if they would not deliver Thormod to them. Skuf then remarked:

"Thou takest this case well violently, farmer Thorkel if thou really wilt kill Thormod who is thy guest and King Olaf's courtier and bard. — Should King Olaf get to know that you had killed the man he had recommended to thy help and protection — if it should be necessary —, you would pay dearly for it: It has happened here as so often before, that one, in anger cannot see that which is just. Now on Thormod's behalf we will pay you finds in money for slaughter and the injury which has been inflicted on you thereby. Thorkel's anger cooled at Skuf's remonstrances; there were besides many who took part in trying to arrange a reconciliation between them and it ended with Skuf leaving it to Thorkel to decide the fines for Lodin's death. Thormod then went to Stokkaness, where he remained."

Here he laid plans to take bloody revenge on Thorgrim Trolle and his family — for which purpose he had come to Greenland. Skuf's man *Egil*, a big strong man, ugly in appearance, clumsy and unintelligent, for which he was called *Fool-Egil*, became his companion later on.

"The summer after these occurrences, people went to the assize at *Gardar* in Ericsfiord. They who came from Ericsfiord arranged their tent booths on a spot where a little hill lay between them and the place where the inhabitants of Einarsfiord had raised their tents. Thorgrim had not yet arrived when most of the others had covered their assize booths. Shortly after, they saw him come in a procession. His ship was magnificent and his warriors both selected and well equipped. Thorgrim's arrogance was so great, that people hardly dared speak to him. When Thorgrim's ship reached land, people went down to the shore to see his, and his people's magnificence and armour equipment. Greenlanders always used to have hunting and fishing implements on their vessels, and Thormod who was also present, took a seal harpoon, which had been thrown on land, and examined it. But one of Thorgrim's attendants grasped the harpoon saying: "Let go, man! It is of little use for thee to have that in thy hand. I do not suppose thou understandest even in hunting, how to use it."

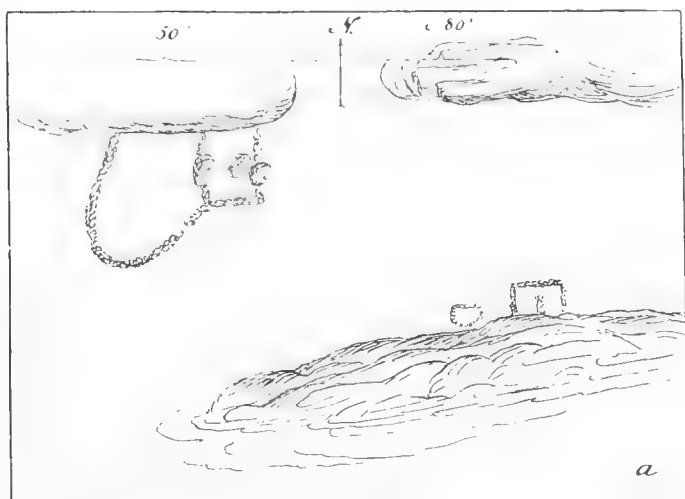
To which was answered:

"It is also doubtful whether thou understandest shooting better than I do."

"I do without doubt!"

Thormod then chanted:

"He who runs quickly on rocks,  
merrily boasts  
that he the harpoon better  
than we understand to swing.



(D. B. 1894)

(in Danish feet).



(D. B. 1894)

The farm Brattahlid (Kagssiarssuk).

Sheep folds lying north of Kagssiarssuk near the coast of Tunugdliarfik.  
Ground-plan and view.

Certainly I well remember  
that the noble-minded prince  
us, that he gold has given,  
a shieldcastle often had made."

Thormod went from there to Thorgrims booth. It was hung with beautiful tapestries, and everything was arranged in the best manner.

It happened at the assize one day, when the weather was fine that everyone had left Skuf's and Biarni's booth, except Thormod who was alone. He lay in the booth and slept. He had spread a double skin over him, which had fur on both sides. The one black and the other white. After Thormod had slept some time he awoke and saw that they were all gone. He was astonished at it, as before he fell asleep, many people had been present. At the same time Egil came rushing into the booth saying:

"Thou missest too much of a grand pastime."

Thormod asked:

"Where from comest thou — which games are they now playing?"

Egil answered:

"I was at Thorgrim Einarsson's booth, and there the most of the assize people were gathered."

Thormod asked:

"What are they amusing themselves with, there."

Egil answered:

"Thorgrim is about to relate."

"With whom does it deal?"

"I do not quite know, but it is certain that he relates both well and amusingly and they have given him a chair to sit on by the booth. People have settled round about and are listening to the tale."

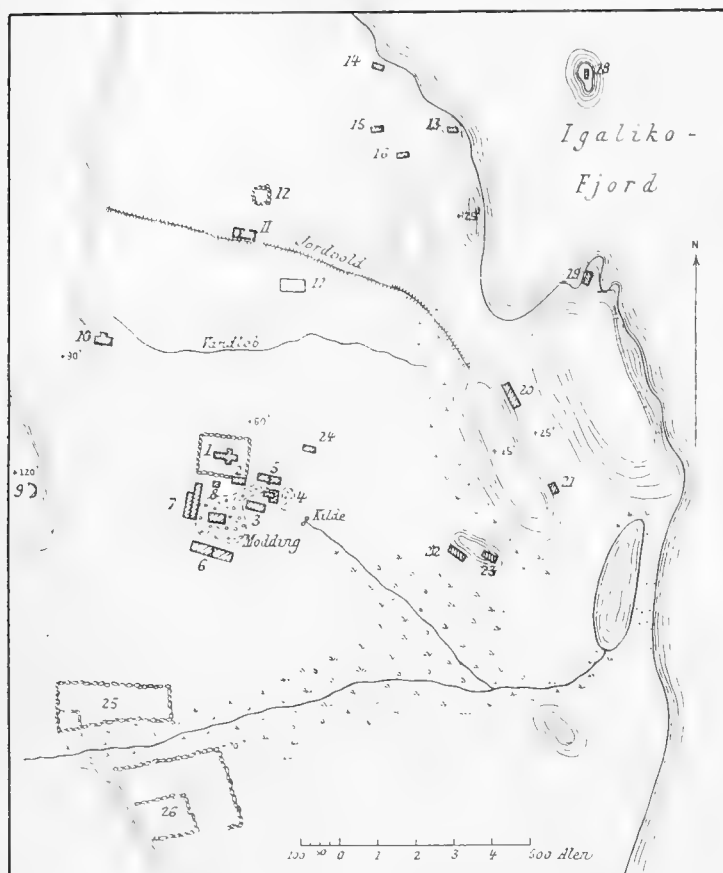
Thormod said: "Thou canst well remember one or another man that he has named in the saga as thou sayest it is so amusing."

"A certain Thorgeir is mentioned in the saga who is a great hero, and it occurs to me that Thorgrim himself appears — strenuous as one can imagine. If only thou wouldst go thyself and hear — it is so amusing."

"It may be," answered Thormod. He stood up cast his fur coat over him turning the black side out. In his hand he took an axe and he put a hat on his head, after which he went to Thorgrim's booth with Egil. They stopped beside the wall of the booth and began to listen to the tale; but they could not hear distinctly what was said. The weather had been clear and the sun had shone, but when Thormod came to the booth it began to darken. He now looked up into the air, now down onto the earth at his feet.

Egil asked: "Wherefore behavest thou so ridiculously?"

Thormod answered: "Both heaven and earth have the aspect they are wont to have shortly before a thunder-crash."



(G. Holm 1880 &amp; Daniel Braun 1894)

Map of the plain at Igaliko (Gardar) (in Danish ell).

(refer to page 91).

On the homefields, which are screened, to the north, by an earthen dike (Jordvold), and limited, to the south, by a little stream of water (Vandløb), lie, the cross church (1) with a churchyard (2), close to the dwelling-house (4), surrounded by large and small houses (2, 3, 8, 24) besides large stables for cows, horses and sheep(?), with appertaining hay-barns (5, 6, 7). They are surrounded by the kitchen and stable refuse heaps (Mødding). A spring (Kilde) is to be found in the vicinity of the dwelling-house. Other outhouses, mostly sheep (goat) stalls are found further away on and near the homefields (21, 22, 23) where smaller open folds are also seen (9, 10, 11, 12, 17). Some smaller sites outside the homefields (13, 14, 15, 16) are perhaps remains of *assize booths* (refer to pages 91). A few unimportant ones are found on the vicinity. Very big stone dike-enclosures bear witness to the number of sheep and goats being very great (25, 26). — Near the landing-place remains of a depository are seen (19), one resembling it, build of great blocks up against a low mountain side (20) has probably been something of the same sort. On an island in the bay (18) a depository is to be found. In 1910 No. 2 and No. 20 were the only ruins left near Igaliko. On rocks further out in the bay, there are ruins.

"What does such a thunder-crash mean?"

Thormod answered: "They are wont to be the forerunners of wonderful events and when thou hearest the crash, then make thy escape and hasten home to our booth and guard thyself."

Whilst they so talked together a squall came over them with a heavy downpour of rain, and the people hastened away, to their own booths, as they were not prepared for rain. Some went into Thorgrim's booth, so that there was a crowd at the entrance. Thorgrim remained on the chair and waited until the throng of people at the booth-door had decreased. Thormod then said to Egil: "Remain here, whilst I go in front of the booth to see what is happening. But if thou hearest the big crash, run home to the booth as quickly as possible."

Thormod then went in front of the booth to the place where Thorgrim was sitting and asked:

"What saga was that which thou didst relate?"

Thorgrim answered: "The deeds of heroism which that saga contains cannot be told in a few words — but what is thy name?"

He answered: "I am called Ótryggr (i. e.: "Unreliable").

"Whose son art thou" asked Thorgrim.

"I am Tortrygs son."

Then Thorgrim would rise from his chair. Thormod struck him on the head with the axe so that he split it down to the shoulders; directly there after he hid the axe under his coat, sat down, and taking Thorgrim's shoulders on his lap shouted at the same time:

"Come here! Thorgrim has been dangerously wounded."

Many turned that way and saw the wound. They asked Thormod if he knew who had attacked Thorgrim. He answered:

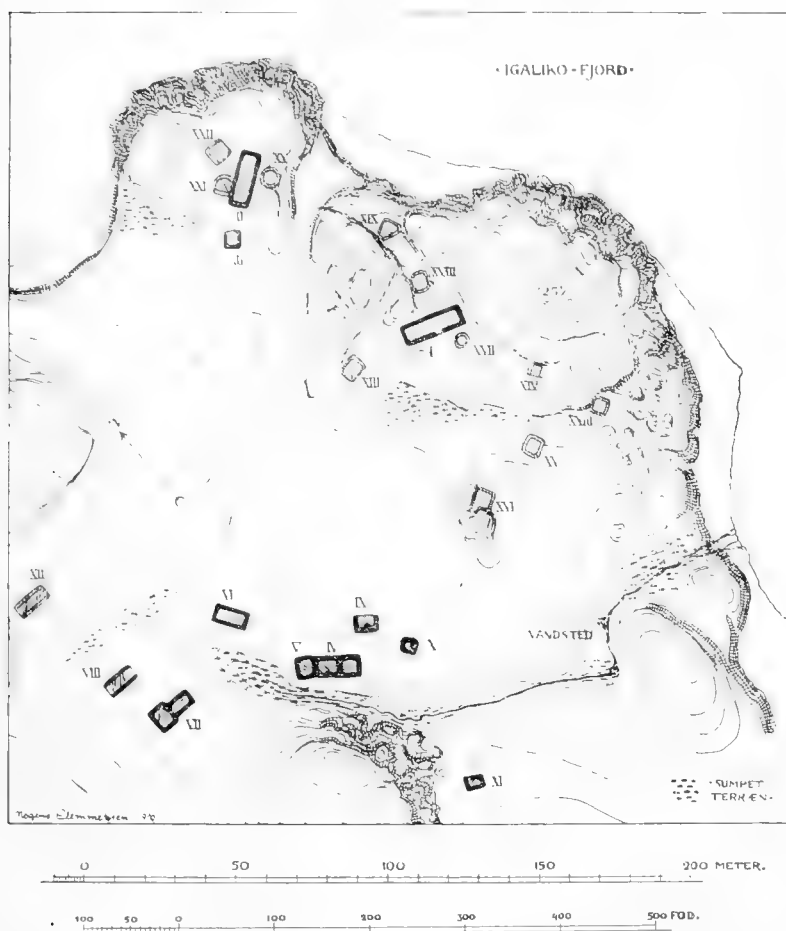
"I saw him just now. I ran here and sat down so as to support Thorgrim's shoulders, when the deed was done; but I did not see what became of him who committed it."

Others now sat down and supported Thorgrim's shoulders but Thormod went away — along the shore, passing a point; there he turned his fur coat so that the white side showed.

When Egil heard the crash, which was caused by Thormod striking Thorgrim he ran home to Skuf's booth. People saw a man running and they thought it was the man who had wounded Thorgrim. Egil became very frightened when he saw that many, partly armed, pursued him and when they took hold of him, his legs shook under him through fear; but when they saw that it was Egil they knew that it was not he who had attacked Thorgrim. His fright then disappeared like the fiery red of hot iron.

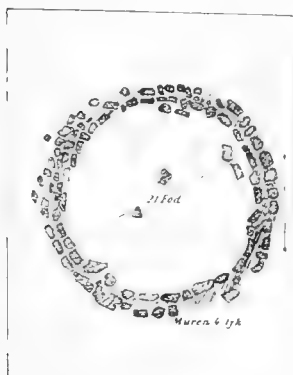
His pursuers then went to the booth to search for the manslayer but he was not to be found. Then they spread along the shore, past the point which here stretched out into the sea. There they met a man in a white fur and they asked him his name. He called himself *Vigfus*.





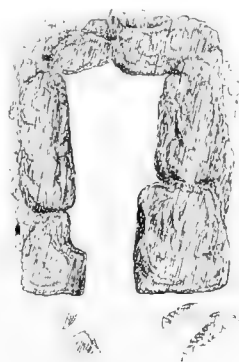
(Mogens Clemmensen 1910)

Sketch of the assize grounds at Igaliko (Gardar)  
with ruins of the assize booths (Refer to the map page 89 with ruins from 12  
to 16). Vandsted = Watering place; Sumpet Terræn = Swampy grounds.



(D. B. 1894)

The ground plan of a round pen (fold) at  
Igaliko (refer to the map page 89 No. 12).



(D. B. 1894)

The ground plan of a big animal trap  
at Igaliko (refer to page 125).

They asked where he intended going. He answered that he was searching the man who had wounded Thorgrim. So they turned in opposite directions, and as both parties walked very quickly they were soon far apart from each other.

Skuf and Biarni missed Thormod and they suspected that it was he who was guilty of the assault as, in Norway, Skuf had heard what the king had hinted — that Thorgeir Havarson's death would be revenged."

They searched for him and took him on board their vessel, explaining to him the danger which overhung him, as the mighty chieftain's kinsmen naturally would pursue him, but he answered them in a song how glad he was about what he had done, and that he would furthermore extend the revenge of bloodshed to Thorgrim Trolle's friends and family.

"They took Thormod with them to Ericsfiord and accompanied him to a cave in the rocks, which is now called *Thormod's cave*. It lies at the edge of the sea in a cliff on one side of the Fjord just opposite Stokkaness. Above and under the cave are rocks, which are very steep and very difficult to ascend. Skuf and Biarni then said to Thormod: "Thou must remain here in the cave, but we shall come to thee as soon as the assize is dissolved."

They then went back to the assize. They missed Thormod there and people took it for granted that he had killed Thormod. Bödvar and Falgeir brought an action against him for manslaughter, and Thormod was pronounced on outlaw.

After the assize was ended everyone went home. Skuf and Biarni repaired to Thormod and brought him food and what he otherwise would need, likewise they told him of the sentence of outlawry which had been pronounced over him. They advised him therefore to remain in the cave, as he could not live in peace anywhere else, if people got to know where he was to be found. They promised to visit him every now and then. In front of the entrance to the cave, was a big piece of ground, overgrown with grass; but even nimble men could hardly jump from the point of the cliff down onto the grass-plot.

The sojourn in the cave bored Thormod, as he could not find anything to do to pass the time with. One fine day he decided to go out of the cave. He climbed up the cliff taking his axe with him. After having gone a little way, he met a man, who was tall, but terrible, ugly and loathsome to look at. He had a coat on made only of rags in squares like tripe, having at the top a hood of the same sort. It was full of vermin. Thormod asked the man his name. He answered: "I am called Oddi."

"What sort of man art thou?"

"I am a beggar, swift in running and they call me *Louse-Oddi*. I have no fixed service, but I am no liar and I know much. I benefit by people's charitableness; but what art thou called?"



(P. Vibeek)



(N. V. Ussing 1900)

Igaliko (The ancient Gardar).

- 1 A general view of the ancient home-fields.
- 2 Eskimoe cattle in the fields.

"Torradi!"

"What man art thou Torrad!"

"I am a merchant, wilt thou trade with me?"

"I have not much to trade with, but by the way, what wilt thou trade with?"

"I will buy the coat, thou hast on."

"Thou shalt not make fun of me."

"That is not my intention. I will sell you the cloak I have on for the coat thou hast on, if thou wilt go on a message for me to Stokkaness, where thou must be this evening, and tell Skuf and Biarni that thou hast met a man today who called himself Torrad, and who changed overcoats with thee. Thou shalt have no more errands, and if thou fulfillest this one well, the cloak is thine."

"It is not easy to cross the fiord, I require shall a boat but I will see about fulfilling the errand. I shall do everything in my power to be at Stokkaness this evening."

So they exchanged their overclothing. Oddi took the black cloak, and gave Thormod the coat, which he put on.

Thormod went to Einarsfiord, and there he met a shepherd who served Thordis at Lönguness, and he asked him if Thordis's sons were at home.

The shepherd answered:

"Bödvar is not at home, but his brothers were at home last night: "they are now out fishing."

"Very well."

The shepherd thought that this man must be Louse-Oddi. They soon parted, and Thormod went to Thordis's boat-shed, where he remained until the evening. He then saw the brothers rowing to the land. Thorkel sat foremost in the boat, Thord in the middle, and Falgeir in the baling part. As the boat was quickly approaching the shore Thorkel went into the prow so as to jump on land and take hold of the boat. Thormod then went out of the boat-shed, — those arriving thought it was Louse-Oddi. Thormod now ran towards Thorkel and struck him with both hands on the head so that it split right down to the shoulders, and he died at once. Thormod then hurried away, casting the coat from him. Thord and Falgeir ran after him; but he ran away from them as fast as he could until he reached the cliff on the shore above the cave. Thormod ran down from its edge onto the grass-plot in front of the cave's entrance; Thord sprang after him; but his knees gave way and he lent forwards as he came down onto the grass. At the same moment Thormod struck him with his axe so that it sunk between his shoulders right down to the handel; but before he could pull the axe out of the wound again Falgeir sprang down onto the plot of earth and immediately struck Thormod. The stroke hit Thormod between the shoulders leaving a bad wound. Now Thormod went for Falgeir and

Ilmaussak

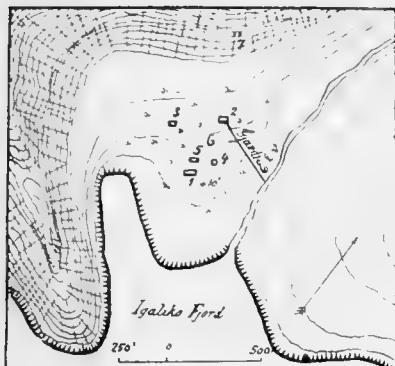
Nunarsaruaq

Kiddlavat



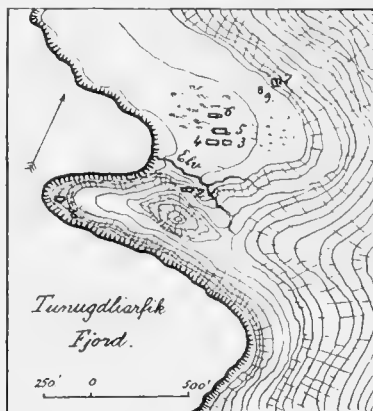
Tunugdliarfik (Ericsfiord) seen from the Igaliko-tongue of land (the "Eid") looking southwards.  
(F. Gross after a sketch by D. B. 1894)





(D. B. 1894)

a. Ruin group (No. 49) at the head of Igabikoñord near Tasingortassak (the ancient farmstead "Vik")



(D. B. 1894)

b. Ruin group (No. 44) Kiagtut (the ancient farmstead "Stokkaness") Tunugdliarfikfjord.

„Vik and Stokkaness” (in Danish feet).

- a. The ruin-group No. 49 lies near a river coming from the mountain range Igdlersfigsalik. On the home-field there is grass and luxuriant willow-thicket. 1 Dwelling houses; 2 Stable with a hay-barn; 3—4 Small store-houses; 5 Stable(?); 6 a little house; 7 a little fold on the mountain side.
- b. The ruin-group No. 44, a little farmstead. 1 a store house near the coast. 2—3 small houses; 4 a house; 5 Dwelling-houses(?); 6 Stable with a hay-barn; 7 a fold with two enclosures or houses. The home-field is small but luxuriant in grass, partly overgrown with willow thicket.



Viking-Grave(?)

In several places on the coast of Tunugdliarfik some stone-heaps are seen, which Steenstrup has supposed to be Viking-Graves.

was also drowned; but at last Thordis and her remaining son, Bödvar, got an inkling of his place of refuge.

They now decided to search him and take revenge:

"They got up in the night, took a big boat which belonged to them manned it with 15 men and rowed that night to Ericsfiord."

[Whether they had to cross the tongue of land between the two fiords is not mentioned; one could not row from the one fiord to the other without going right down to the south — and that would take days]. It was during the clear nights:

"Thordis travelled now during the night, straight to Brattahlid. Thorkel received them kindly and offered the travellers everything they needed. Thordis said: "The case stands thus; I intend visiting the old couple, Gamli and Grima, thy assize folk, as I believe to have heard with certainty, that Thormod, he, whom we had pronounced an outlaw, and whom many supposed to be drowned, is living with them. Now I wish thee to go with us and arrange it so that we get our due over Gamli and Grima. Thou wilt best get to know how things go between us when thou hearest our conversation thyself."

Thorkel answered: "It seems to me very unlikely that Gamli has thy outlaw in his charge; but I will go with thee if thou absolutely wishest it."

Thordis and her followers broke their fast there, whilst Thorkel collected his folk, as he would not be subjected, to Thordis and Bödvar's discretion, should they disagree.

When they had eaten to the full, Thorkel went on board a vessel with 20 men, and both boat-parties started on their journey.

Grima, it is said, had suspected danger, having been warned in dreams, and Gamli remained at home, from fishing, in case anything should happen.

"Gamli's wife Grima owned a chair, on the back of which a stately picture of Thor was carved. Grima said in the morning:

"Now I will tell you what is to take place — to day. My chair I will place in the middle of the floor in the dwelling-room. On it — thou shall sit, Thormod, as soon as the strangers come; but thou mayest not raise thyself as long as Thordis is present. Thou mayest not rise from the chair, even if thou thinkest remarkable things happen, or that discord arises in thy vicinity. If thou art destined to die it will be of no use to seek a recess. — Thou, Gamli, shalt hang a caldron over the fire and cook seal flesh and thou shalt cast sweepings onto the fire and contrive it so that the house will become full of smoke; I will sit in the doorway, spinning, and receive those who come."

Everything was arranged as Grima had determined. When Thorkil's and Thordis' vessels were seen to steer towards land, Thormod sat down on the chair. Gamli had now set the caldron over the fire and heated it with all sorts of sweepings, so that the house was filled with





(N. V. Ussing 1900)

Kitdlavat Mountain (1460 m) seen from the West.



(N. V. Ussing 1900)

North coast of Tunugdliarfik (Ericstfiord).  
Ilimaussak Mountain (1450 m) in the back ground.

a thick and badly smelling smoke; besides which, causing a dense darkness so that one could not see in there. Grima sat on the threshold, spinning wool and humming a song that others did not understand.

Now when the vessels had reached land the people left them and went up to the houses. Thorkel was in front. Grima received him politely and bade him enter.

Thorkel answered:

"Thordis from Lönguness is here with me, and she assumes with certainty, that Thormod, her outlaw enemy, is living here with thee. We wish thee to deliver him, if thou knowest where he is, as it by no means will be adviseable for thee to hide an outlaw from Thordis and her son Bödvar."

Grima answered:

"It seems strange to me that Thordis can believe that I hide her outlawed enemy. I am only second in my hut and would not defy such mighty people as they at Lönguness". —

"Truely it is strange," answered Thorkel, "but we will search thy house-room all the same."

Grima answered:

"You are free to search through my house, even if you had not brought so many people with you. I am wont to be glad when thou visitest me, but I will be very displeased with the people from Einarsfiord if they make havoc or commit violences in my own dwelling."

To that Thorkel answered:

"I and Thordis will go in, so that we two can search the house together."

They then went in and searched thoroughly; but as the rooms were small they did not remain there long. When they opened the door into the dwelling-room it was full of smoke, and they saw nothing remarkable there. The smoke, on the whole, was very bad everywhere, and therefore they remained a much shorter time in the house than they otherwise would have done, had it been free from smoke. So they went out and ransacked everything near the houses.

Then Thordis said:

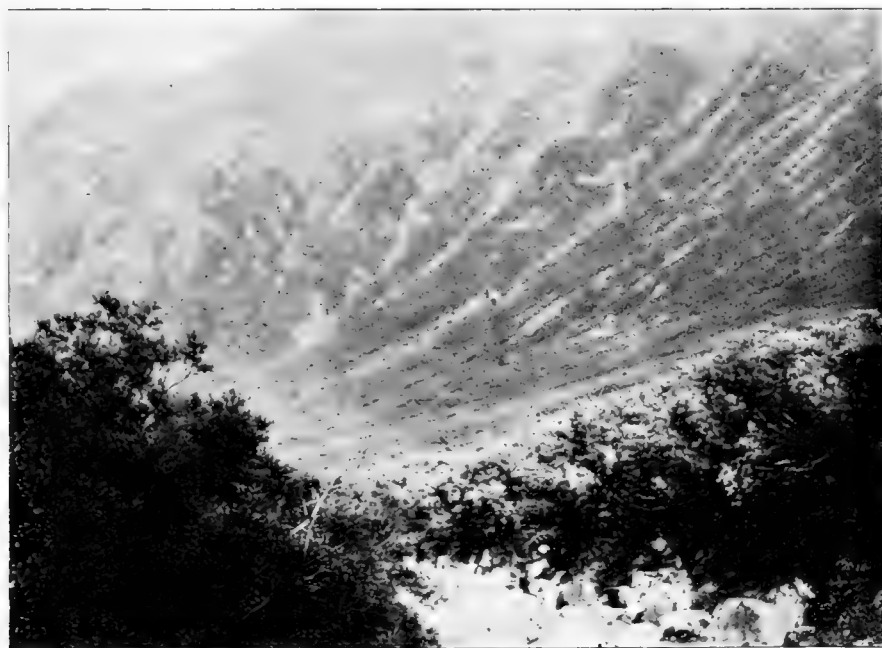
"I could not see properly what there was in the room on account of all the smoke. Let us go up onto the roof and open the "liori" [a cover over the opening for smoke and light on the top of the roof], so that the smoke can come out and we can see what is in the room."

Bödvar and Thordis now went up onto the roof of the house and opened the "liori." The smoke broke out and they could see over the whole room. They saw Grima's chair standing in the middle of the floor with the picture of Thor and his hammer carved on the back. Whereas they saw nothing of Thormod. So they got down from the roof and went to the door. Then Thordis said.

"There is still something left of thy heathenism, Grima, as Thor's



(photo)



(photo)

Vegetation — Arsukfiord.  
(Eastern Settlement).

picture is carved on the back of thy chair." Grima answered: "It is seldom I can go to church to hear learned men preach as it is such a long way; and my having so few people at home.

Now when I look at Thor's picture I often come to think that I can break it into pieces and burn it whenever I please. How much greater He must be, who has made heaven and earth, and all things visible, and who has given life to both visible and invisible things, and whom no one can vanquish."

Thordis answered: "Possibly thou thinkest thus, but I would sooner believe, that we would force thee to tell the truth if Thorkel were not present with all his people, as I have a foreboding that thou art not wholly ignorant of Thormod's resort."

Grima answered:

"Here the proverb may be applied, that he who guesses, guesses wrong," also another: "That always something is ready to save them who are not to die early; but thou oughtest to thank "God" that he has protected thee, so that the devil has not had the power to make thee do bad deeds, such as thou mightest have a liking for, it can be excused that sometimes when guessing a person misses the truth, but not, on the other hand, when one has heard the truth and will not believe it."

After this conversation they parted.

Thorkel went to Brattahlid and Thordis went home. Skuf and Biarni went secretly to Grima and Gamli, brought them the necessary things, they were in want of, and refunded them all the expenses they had concerning Thormod.

### About Thormod.

"When Thormod was completely cured of the wound Falgeir had given him, Skuf and Biarni took him home to Stokkaness with them and kept him hidden in an out-house. There Thormod remained the third winter. During this time Biarni and Skuf sold the farm Stokkaness and other estates which they owned, likewise their cattle, as they intended leaving Greenland. Early in the spring they equipped their ship and drew it out into the sea. Then Thormod felt inclined to take a trip. He pretended to have an errand northwards in the fiord, and procured himself a boat. Fool Egil went with him; he took the oars and Thormod the rudder."

Thormod's thirst for revenge drove him, before leaving at the last moment to try and kill Thorgrim Trolle's sister's sons. He wished to be able to come before King Olaf after having also persecuted them.

Fool-Egil and Thormod therefore rowed in the direction of Lön-guiness in quiet, beautiful sunny weather.

Thormod suddenly began to rock the boat, so that it, at last, upset.

Fool-Egil saved himself got the boat clear, after which he rowed back again, as he could not find Thormod, who, alternately swimming above and under water, had reached land taking an axe along with him. He now wrung his wet clothes, and repaired to the farm *Hamar* [in the eastern fiord] the inhabitants of which lived in enmity with *Liot* and *Thorun*. He went to *Langaness* accompanied by a man, where he had *Liot* called out. He came out with his spear in his hand and when his eye fell on Thormod he struck at him with it; but Thormod parried the thrust with his axe, which fell down on his own foot giving him a deep wound. Thormod's companion now cut at *Liot*, as he bent forward to strike Thormod again — giving him a bad wound in the back. Thereafter they parted. Thormod dressed his wound and went in the direction of a fishing hut, which *Thorun* owned. Here he hid himself in the sea-weed on the shore. Towards evening two of *Thordis*' men came back from fishing. Thormod could hear them talking as they came rowing in the boat. They laid down to sleep and Thormod tried to escape with their boat. In the mean time, *Thordis* went out on the same night to search him, as it is related, having been warned in a dream. Thormod was now obliged to let the boat drift, whilst he hid himself in the sea-weed on a little holm. His enemies sought him here, they even stuck through the sea-weed, but once more he invoked King *Olaf*'s assistance, and he escaped the danger. Now Thormod swam from one rock to the other and, — once more through King *Olaf*'s assistance, was again saved that night by a peasant called *Grim*, who took him to *Skuf* and *Biarni*. Whilst these two were making the last preparations for the journey, Thormod succeeded in finding and killing *Liot*, — and first then he sailed from Greenland and came to King *Olaf* in Norway, who paid him great honour. When the king asked him what great deeds he had achieved, he sang:

“Thorgrim Trolle I felled  
heavily fell the champion to the earth  
Death I *Liot* prepared  
although he was not afraid of spears,  
Thorkel I robbed of life  
Thord was the fourth I killed,  
Falgeir the chieftain of them  
I killed and laid in earth.”

And he sung furthermore when the king said that he had let them pay dearly:

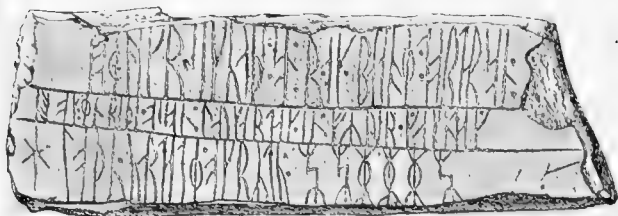
“Greenland'smen, who at court  
judged me outlaw, I singed;  
late will they the singing forget  
Hard have I struck the brave ones.

Never the wound will heal  
Which I the sword-storm lovers  
struck, if they do not succeed  
The life out of me to take."

"There thou art right" said the king. "The wound will heal slowly, that thou hast given them." Thormod now remained with King Olaf and was highly esteemed by him, he was considered the bravest man, in all the trials of manhood he was put to. He accompanied the king, when he left the country, and he shared Olaf's exile with him; he also accompanied him back again to Norway, as he thought it better to die with him than to outlive him. — —"

Thormod Kolbrúnarskáld fell in the battle of *Stiklestad*.





Runic Stone found at Kingigtorsuak Lat. 72°55'

## Chapter VII.

### The most remote Greenland.

Whilst the Icelandic colonization in Greenland, as we have heard, kept within the two settlements in the present Danish south Greenland, the coasts further north were by no means unknown to Greenlanders. Thither they went, from the eastern and western settlements on summer excursions, so as to make use of the excellent territory there for the capturing of whales and seals, besides which they here collected a number of drifting timber which especially was of importance for the building of houses. This so-called "*northerly place of residence*" (Nordrseta) or places of resort are mentioned several times. *Eric the Red* seems already to have found some up there. It is said, as one will remember, that Thorhal Hunter had been a long time up there with Eric during the summer. These summer trips must have been a delightful diversion for the Norsemen in Greenland, and as they moreover brought them great profits, it is easily understood that every one who was able to, fitted out an expedition with those distant uninhabited parts as a goal.

We can see that these northly places of residence included amongst others *Greipar* and *Kroksfiordsheidi*, whilst one was previously, more inclined to think, that these places lay far north, on the other side of the present Danish colonies in north Greenland, one is more inclined to assume now that *Greipar* must be sought in the region with the deep fiords south of Jacobshavn glacier, whilst *Kroksfiordsheidi* must be the region about Disko island and the Vajgatt, (the straights between Disko and the mainland).

That the Norsemen went on discovery further north is evident, amongst other things through the finding of a little rune stone in a cairn on the island *Kingigtorssuak* on the  $72^{\circ} 55' 20$  n. lat. It was brought to Denmark some time ago by the well known Captain Graah — the renowned traveller of the south eastern coast, — and a copy of it is found in the national museum in Copenhagen. The inscription is as follows:

“Erling Sigvatsson and Biarni Thordsson and Enridi Oddsson erected this (these) cairn(s) Saturday before soccage (25th April) and — —”

So much is certain, that this — let us call it a “visiting-card” — witnesses that the Greenlanders did not shun travelling to the remote parts of the ice region.

That they went still further north is clearly shown in an account given by the Icelander Biörn Jonsson, and which reads as follows:

*Haldor*, the priest wrote this account to *Arnald*, the Greenland priest, who had become court-priest to King Magnus Hakonsson, on that Knar (commercial-boat) on which bishop Olaf went to Greenland. That summer, in which priest Arnald left Greenland, and was shipwrecked on Hitarnes off Iceland (the year 1265 or 1266) some pieces of timber were found out at sea, which had been hewn with small axes or coopers’ addices, and amongst them there was a piece in which there were teeth wedges and bone wedges. During this summer people also came from *Nordrseta* who had travelled further north than formerly recorded. They found no sign of the Skrællings having lived there except at *Krokksfiordsheidi*, and people consider it to be the shortest way there, wherever they came from.

Thereafter the priests sent a ship northward, so as to investigate, how things were, north, of the remotest part that they, as yet had visited; but as they sailed out of *Krokksfiordsheidi* they lost sight of the coast. A southern wind rose against them combined with darkness and they had to let the ship run before the wind; but when the storm had calmed down and it had again become light, they saw many islands and all sorts of catching, both seals, whales and numbers of bears. They sailed right into the sea-bay and there they lost sight of the whole country, the southern coast as well as the glaciers; but there were also glaciers to the south of them, as far as they could see. There they found some signs of the Skrællings having lived in these places, but they could not land there on account of the bears. They then sailed back again during three days and found some remnants of the Skrællings when they came to some islands south of *Snæfell*. Thereafter they sailed southwards to *Krokksfiordsheidi*, a long day’s rowing, on Jacob’s mass day; it froze there during the nights, but the sun shone both night and day, not being higher when in the south, than if — when a man lies down athwart in a six oar boat, stretched towards the railing — the shadow of the board nearest the sun came across



his face; but at midnight it was as high, as it was at home in the settlement, when in the northwest. They then went back home to *Gardar*”

As one does not know how high the railing in the olden boats rose above the thwart one cannot give the exact situation of *Kroksfiordsheidi*; but there is no doubt that it must be searched in very northerly latitudes.

As one will see the ship did not follow Greenland's coast but steered out to sea (Baffin's bay?) until it reached a big bay or fiord, perhaps *Jones-Sound* or up in *Smith-Sound*.

It is furthermore related in Biörn Jonsson's account:

About the inhabitants of Greenland's northern regions.

“All the important peasants in Greenland had big ships and barges built to be sent to the northern hunting resorts, provided with various instruments and hewn timber, and at times they went themselves as it is related in the records, thus in *Bard Helgi's Saga* and the tale of *Thordis*; there they used to prepare seal tar, as every sort of seal capture was better there than at home in the settlement: melted seal fat was poured into skin-boats, which were hung up in the wind, in isolated drying houses, until it congealed; afterwards it was prepared as it should be. These so-called *Nordrsetumenn* had their booths or huts in *Grei-par* and some in *Kroksfiordsheidi*. There is drifting timber, but no trees grow there; trees and all wreckage of the sea coming from *Markland's* bays accumulate mostly at this northern point of Greenland.” —

After having thus rendered an account of the Greenlanders doings in the northern parts of the country, we shall, according to a beautiful old poem which is a reconstruction of a lost saga, relate about:

*Bard Helgi*, Greenland's law-speaker who lived in the first half of the eleventh century, and who visited *Grei-par* under special circumstances.

*Eric the Red's* celebrated family passed out of history with the death of his son's son, *Thorkel Leifsson*, which must have taken place about 1030. The family's chieftain seat *Brattahlid* evidently continued to be the central point of the colony in the eastern settlement, as it appears in the poem, which, according to the taste of that time, is rather sentimental, but well composed. It contains sections of no slight effect, and enlightens besides the life in Greenland, undoubtedly in a reliable manner according to *Finnur Jónsson's* assertion.

*Helgi* was an Icelandic peasant's son and of a poetical disposition. He had besides an inclination for violent deeds, and led a roving life partly through an unhappy passion for an Icelandic girl *Thorkatla*. After being sentenced an outlaw he went from Norway to Greenland on-board a trading-ship. The journey was one series of misfortunes. Storm and contrary winds checked the speed, heavy seas threatened to founder the ship. Distress was great, and the shiphands, who were imbued with heathen thoughts began to consult as to how far it agreed

with their ideas of life after death, if they killed each other fighting, and still were sure of glory in the other life. But Helgi who was a more earnest christian than his shipmates, advised them to pray and invoke God — and they now sighted Greenland:

“There the glaciers land they knew  
and *Ericsfjord* as well  
to *Falgeirsvik* they steered  
and there the ship found harbour.

A peasant rich and mighty  
— in the district — *Forni* named,  
on *Solarfiall* he lived  
and hospitably received them.

*Solarfiall* was a farm under a high mountain of the same name, lying either in the innermost part of *Ericsfjord* or in the present *Tasiusak* bay, one of the old middle fiords, to which there is an easy passage from *Ericsfjord*.

We will now turn further south in the *eastern settlement* to the farm *Heriølsness* (now *Ikigait*). Here lived a peasant, *Skeggi hinn prúdi*, (*Skeggi* the proud) who was an excellent man, and in good favour with all. His wife was called *Thorun*; she was a consort worthy of him, who only — as the saga says — had one fault, namely an ugly tooth. In the neighbourhood of *Heriølsness*, in a little house by the shore an elderly, cunning man, *Thorvard Hreim*, lived with two sons and a woman called *Grima*. She was old and skilled in the art of witchcraft, in which, according to report, she instructed the whole family. At last people forbade the family to live in the settlement, and the father and sons were declared outlaws.

“They north to *Greipar* went  
there Greenland’s settlements end.”

*Skeggi* also went up there in a well equipped ship; but he did not return, and one suspects, — certainly rightly — *Hreim*’s sons of having attacked and murdered *Skeggi*.

*Thorun* was a widow for some years. Each time she was betrothed her future husband died of an illness, which one assumed was brought upon the one concerned through witchcraft by *Hreim*’s sons.

Helgi now let himself be persuaded to betroth himself to the rich widow at *Heriølsness* although his mind was still set on *Thorkatla*.

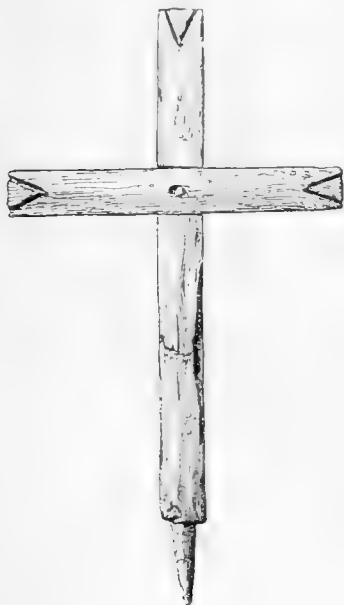
“A glorious wedding was held  
but Helgi’s grief yielded not.  
Him no sport delighted,  
and silent he always remained.



A woollen dress  
out of a Norse Grave (1 m long).



A granit tombstone  
(1,1 m long). The inscription (in majus-  
culæ) reads as follows: "Here rests  
Hro(ar?) Kolgrimsson".



A wooden Cross  
of fir from a Norse Grave (30,5 cm long).



(Th. Groth 1880)

A map sketch.

Near the coast one sees the old church-  
ruin and churchyard, from which sev-  
eral discoveries derive from the Norse-  
age; further north some house sites  
lie, besides which Greenlander houses.

**Ikigait (The ancient Herjolfsness)**  
near Ostproven (Eastern Settlement).

All the objects are to be found in the National museum in Copenhagen.

With naught, a loving wife  
him enliven could;  
through love to another one,  
for hers he was dull.

Each even and each morn  
stood Katla in his mind."

Thorun in the mean time inflamed him to wreak vengeance upon her first husband's slayers, and Helgi equipped a ship and went to the western settlement, from there to go further northwards:

"He thirty men chose  
to this warrior march  
with armour, helm and weapons  
he furnished them well.

Towards north to *Greipar* drew  
this bold seamen flock.  
Soon wind the sail distended  
soon the use of oars is tried.  
Wild is that sea — and the way long."

The outlaws had lived:

"towards north on *Greipar's* coast,"

and here Helgi attacked them in their residence. It was a hard fight; but it ended with his vanquishing them, after which he returned to *Heriölsnes*:

"with goods and glory."

Helgi's reputation now grew on account of this achievement:

"To law-speaker folk him chose;  
he adjusted the lands law,  
as no one else was thought  
able thereunto but he."

But in spite of glory and honour his heart was heavy and sorrowful, as he still longed for the beloved one of his youth. When he went about in the settlement he wrapped himself in a fur coat, which Katla had given him; thereby "he revived his grief," and when at last the coat was worn old and useless, he spread it over his couch.

Thorkatla lived, in the mean time, in quiet grief on the farm *Sau-*

*dafell* in the west of the country in the neighbourhood of Hvamsfiord. She would see no strangers, and the poem now gives a tragic description of, how she, after having got an inkling of Helgi's place of residence, leaves Iceland to search him at Brattahlid.

"An autumn she went to Norway  
there the wintertide passed,  
in spring-time a vessel  
to Greenland was fitted out."

She travelled with it, and in the autumn they came to the eastern settlement. The ship lay to, and on the shore a booth was raised. When Helgi came down to trade:

"There suddenly she cheered  
at most unlooked-for sight.

Right heartfelt, the beauty,  
he pressed to his breast  
who can depict entirely  
what each now felt.

Helgi was unfortunately for them bound by his marriage to Thorun; but Katla was all the same invited to stay the winter at Brattahlid.

"So well Thorun tended  
the loving pairs doings  
that Helgi, Katla, could  
never a love-word say."

The winter passed, and the Norwegian men prepared to travel home: "in spring's bland days."

"The heavy winter faded  
in hard distress it was."

Thorun who thus had been clever enough to let Katla live at Brattahlid, where she was under control, hastened now to get her rival away. At the end she allowed her husband, nevertheless, to take leave of Katla in private

"whilst three fires out burned."

Now, the lovers longed for meeting took place:

"In a separate chamber  
with the door ajar."

But these moments passed all too quickly:

“Soon she who watched the fire  
upon the door knocked hard:  
Now it is quite time  
that all speech stops.”

The bitter hour of parting came:

“To the ship he bore Katla  
and straight it sailed away.”

In time it reached Iceland, and Katla once more took up her residence at Saudafell, where she wasted away in sorrow, and died after having given birth to Helgi's son, whom he acknowledged later, when the twelve year old child was sent to Greenland.

It is related of Helgi, that he in his old age at last found that peace of mind he so long had been deprived of. That highly intelligent man was the object of great estimation, and Icelanders who came trading, to Greenland, generally spent the winter at his house.

Bard Helgi is said to have had a son born in Greenland, who also became a poet.

Besides one knows fragments of a so called *Nordrsetudrapa* which is composed by a certain *Sveinn* during a stay at Greipar. The preserved verses speak wildly and strongly of the howling of the wind and the roaring of the waves round the glaciers, which project into the sea, up there in the high north, — about:

“Eger's (i. e.: the sea's) light-hearted daughters, who collected and spun the high mountains' hard frozen whirls.”

Through the poetical tales about the life in the desert regions in the north, we have got a distinct impression that these parts, which as well as being the goal for lively hunting expeditions in the light summer nights, was the scene of tragical events, and outlaws' winter residences, through long periods have taken hold of their fancy.

We will now relate about another Iclander, who in the time of King Harold Hardrade came to Greenland, where he bought a polar bear. Later on he went with it to Norway and Denmark, where he presented it to King Sven Estridsson, as it is told in a charming tale about him.

The commercial intercourse between Greenland and Scandinavia could at times take place without greater misfortunes and within a reasonable span of time; but through the dangers and uncertainties of the ice, navigation entailed an ever increasing amount of disasters, of which we have an example in:

The tale of Lika-Lodinn.



(Godthaabs photo. atelier)

A view of Godthaabsfiord seen from Kór nok (Western settlement).



(Knud Rasmussen 1905)

A part of a lake behind Ilulialik near Godthaabsfiord (Western settlement)

"In this ice from the northern sea-bays most of the ships of yore ever foundered, of which much is related in the tale of TOSTI, as *Lika-Lodinn* (corpse-Lodinn) got his nickname thereby, he often in the summer visited the northern uninhabited districts, and from there brought back with him the human bodies to the church, which he found in caves and clefts, their having come there from the flakes of ice or shipwrecks, but beside them often lay scratched runes, of all that occurred and their misfortunes and sufferings."

In another tale it is related that *Lika-Lodinn* was so called, "because he had brought *Finn Fegin's* and his crew's bodies from *FINS-BUDIR*, which lies east of the glaciers in Greenland, by command of King Olaf the Holy, because this Finn was a son of *Ketil Kalf* at Ringeness on *Heidmörk*, and *Gunild*, King Olaf's sister."

It is now related, that when King Harold Sigurdsson, also called *Hardrade*, in August 1066, undertook his last disastrous campaign to England against King Harold Godvin'sson, accompanied by the brother, of the last mentioned, Tosti Godvinsson, they met *Lika-Lodinn*, who came by ship from Greenland, outside *Sognefiord*. *Lodinn* went on board and told the king about three wonders which had happened during the journey which could imply that he had been exposed to a volcanic outbreak.

The Norwegian king fell in the battle of *Stanford* or *Battlebridge* in the neighbourhood of *York*, September 15th.

It is said, that *Lodinn* accompanied the fleet, and that he according to his promise assisted at King Harold's and his warrior's temporary burial — the next year the corpse was ceremoniously taken back to Norway.

What became of *Lodinn* we do not know, probably this Greenland shipmaster, after having ended his commercial journey, returned home to Greenland.

Then we next hear of other less successful trading trips going through Greenland's ice, which ended with shipwreck and disasters, such, for example, as it is shown in "*Gudmund Aresson's Saga*": *Thorgeir Hallason* from *Eyjafjord* (died 1169) was married to *Hallbera* from *Reykianess*. They had ten children. One of their sons was called *Einar*. He lost his life in Greenland, as the ship foundered in the uninhabited regions.

"The crew had divided into two parties who at last quarreled, because the one party's provisions were eaten before the other's. *Einar* escaped from there with two others, and would search the settlement. He went up onto the glaciers and there they died, having only one day's journey left to the settlement. The bodies were found the following winter. *Einar's* body was whole and uninjured, he rests at *Herjolfsness*."

*Thorgeir Hallason's* fourth son was *INGIMUND*, who was a passenger on board "*Stangarföli*" which was equipped in *Bergen* with Iceland as an aim, but:





An anchorage at Fiskeness. (Adolf S. Jensen. June 1909)



An "Umiak" in the ice at the entrance of Iluaifiord.  
(Eastern settlement). (W. Thalbitzer. 1914)

"Their ship came to *Greenland's uninhabited districts*, and the whole crew perished, which was discovered fourteen years later, when they found the ship and seven men in a cave in the rock. Amongst them was *INGIMUND*, his body was whole and undecayed, as well as his clothes; but beside him lay the skeletons of six men. There were also found wax and such runes, which related the incidents of their death. But this, people took to be a great sign that God being so well pleased with *Ingimund's* behaviour, allowed him to lie so long in the air, with a whole and uninjured body. That summer when "the *Stangarfli*" foundered, *Asmund Kastanraze* came (to Iceland) from Greenland."

Navigation between Greenland and foreign countries must, in those days, have been combined with great difficulties, not least on account of the Greenlanders only having few ships. They wanted both timber and iron. As time went on, and the conditions of life became worse, navigation had become less and less regular. Greenland merchants could hardly reckon upon selling their wares or getting new ones regularly imported. One got along as best one could. Characteristic in this respect is the tale of *Asmund Kastanraze*, who according to the annals in the year 1189 sailed from Greenland on a ship in which there was not a single iron nail, but only wooden nails, and the boards were wound about or fastened together with sinews. He wanted to go to Norway but was driven to Iceland, where he had to remain the following winter. The year following the ship was wrecked.

The dangers and difficulties of navigation are clearly expressed in a declaration from the year 1226, that it took five years to travel to Norway and back again.



Saudafell in Iceland.

(D. B.)



An Eskimoe-stable and enclosure at Igaliko.

(P. Vibæk)

## Chapter VIII.

### Einar Sokkisson and the establishing of the episcopal residence.

**T**he last half of the eleventh century ended without leaving a trace in the saga literature, and in the beginning of the twelfth century we find chief Sokki Thorisson living at *Brattahlid*, which still held a prominent place amongst the Greenland Norsemen's farms.

Events now took place, which, in a high degree, left an impression on the Greenland community, in any case with regards to the clergy, as it is expressed in the tale of *Einar Sokkisson* which is found in the Flatey-book:

On account of the country's isolated position it was hardly possible to get a sufficient number of trained priests in Greenland, and here the need became great, of having a special bishopric. The old peasant Sokki therefore collected people — probably to the assize — and proposed, that "all inhabitants, through joint collection, should contribute to the raising of a bishop's-see. All the peasants consented to it." This however was not sufficient, and Sokki therefore sent his son, Einar, to Norway so as to obtain the consent of the Norwegian king and clergy. "Einar took some walrus-teeth and hides with him so as to gain the chieftain's good graces."

Although the Greenland bishopric, is said, not to have been bigger than a third of an ordinary bishopric in other countries, king *Sigurd Jorsalfar* and the clergy agreed to its foundation, and the Norseman

Arnald consented to undertake the office, after which he was consecrated to it by the Archbishop Asser in Lund (1124).

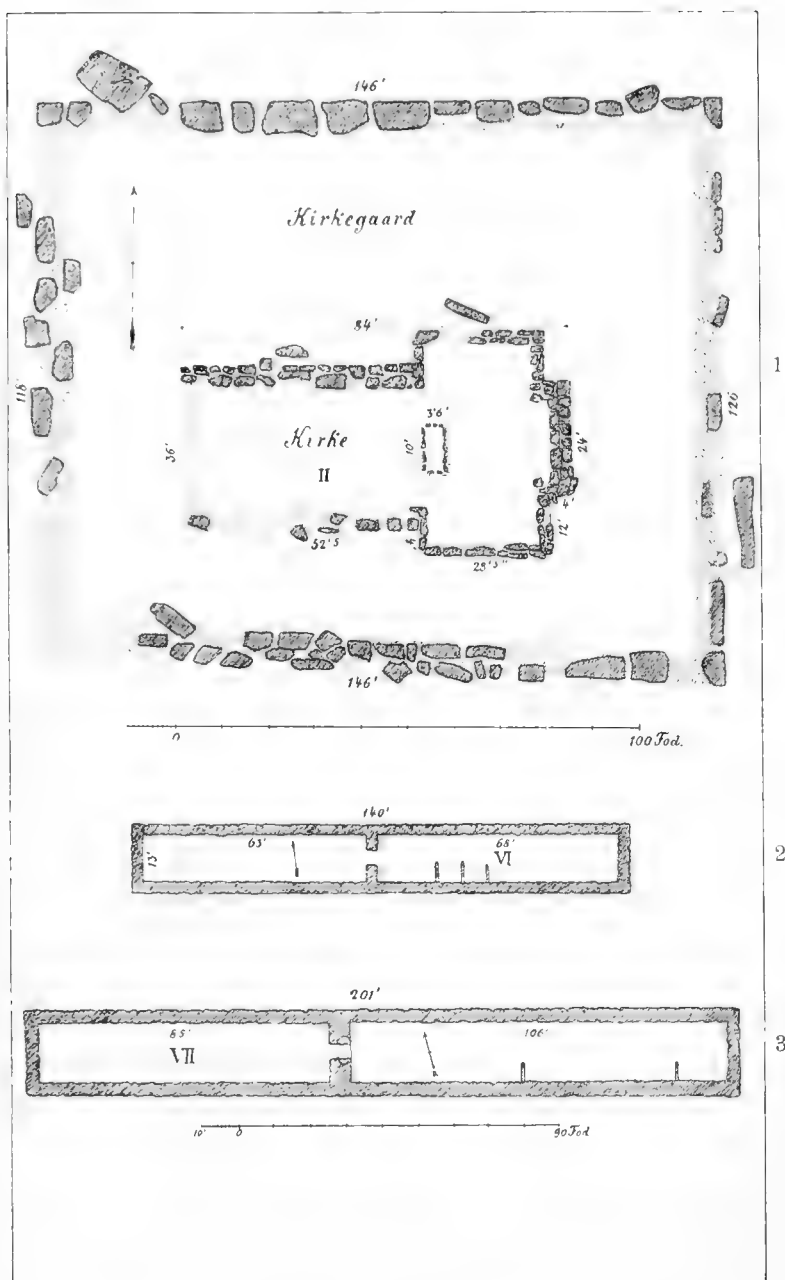
Einar now took the new bishop on board, and they sailed (c. 1125) with Greenland as their objective point. In the mean time, storms drove them to Iceland, where they were obliged to spend the winter, in the south of the country. The bishop stayed with the celebrated SÆMUND FRÓÐI at Oddi, whilst Einar spent the winter in Eyjafialla district.

The Norwegian Arnbiörn sailed the same year with two ships likewise wishing to reach Greenland; but he was driven by rough weather to the uninhabited parts, and perished there. In the meantime we find bishop Arnald, in the year 1126, in Iceland's court at Thingvellir, he subsequently left with Einar for Greenland.

The bishop's-see was now established at Gardar. Here a big church built in the shape of a cross was soon erected, and was dedicated to ST. NIKOLAUS. It was built of stone and earthen walls and its whole length was 25 meters. On the whole at Gardar, which was a very big farm, and will be described later on, there was built a number of big houses partly of red sandstone blocks. There are now only slight remains of the foundations left of all these buildings; but in the neighbouring Greenland houses one sees big stones, which have been taken from the Norse houses.

A few years after the foundation of the bishopric (about 1129) Arnbiörn and his companions' bodies, as well as the stranded ships and goods, were found in the innermost part of a fiord at Hvitserk, near the most southern point of Greenland. The bigger ship was brought together with the goods and the deceaseds' bones to the eastern settlement, where the ship was conveyed to the bishop or Gardar cathedral, who possibly had the ownership of the stranding place. According to Icelandic laws, found goods belonged to the finder if the owner did not report himself within the course of three years. This decision was probably also in force in Greenland. If the bishop's-see appropriated the ship before the expiration of the respite, it was most likely because they did not think that the rightful owner would announce himself in time. In the meantime the news of what had happened, especially that the ships were found and claimed by the bishop-see, had reached Norway, and the Norwegian Össur and several of the shipwrecked's family went to Greenland so as to demand their supposed inheritance.

At the same time *Kolbein Thorliotsson* and *Ketil Kalfsson* as well as the Iclander *Hermund Kodransson* came with several others to Greenland, with three ships, where they overwintered, Össur stayed at Gardar, but the rest of the guides in the western settlement. At the beginning everything went peacefully as the chief plaintiff had been received by the bishop himself. In the course of the winter (c. 1131—1132) Össur brought before the bishop his and his coheir's request of the deliverance of the belongings of their relation Arnbiörn; but they



Igaliko (Gardar).

(D. B. 1894)

- 1 Church (= Kirke) and churchyard (= Kirkegaard).  
 1—3 Stalls with partition stones to the east, hay-lofts to be west.

(Danish feet).

(refer to page 89).

got a refusal, after which Össur immediately left Gardar and moved to another farm. The complaint was also rejected at the assize in the following spring. In his resentment Össur now got the idea of inflicting great damage on Arnbiörns remaining ship, which the bishop still refused to give up. He then went to the Norsemen in the western settlement who advised him to join them, but he returned all the same to the eastern settlement. The bishop in the meantime, had exacted revenge upon him, and on that account he turned to *Einar Sokkisson* who had sworn him his support before he undertook to go to Greenland as bishop. But Einar did not think that he ought to help on this occasion. "They coldly took leave of each other, and the bishop had an angry expression," as it is said. Össur was evidently a man who would defy fate. In itself it was imprudent of him to remain in the eastern settlement, but it was outright daring, that he (c. 1132) — depending on the peace of the church — appeared at the farm Langaness, whilst the bishop said mass there. The saga relates:

Then people gathered together to say mass in the church, and to feast at Langaness, the bishop and Einar were there together at the banquet. Many went to divine service and the bishop sang mass himself. Össur was also there. He stood south of the church, close to its wall, and spoke to a man who was called *Brand Thordsson*, and who lived with the bishop. This man advised Össur to give in to the bishop. "I hope," he said, "that all will then go well, as now there is danger afoot." Össur answered that he could not bring himself to do it, so badly had he been treated — and they conversed earnestly about this. Just at this moment the bishop came walking from the church to the farm house. Einar was in his attendance. When they came to the entrance of the big room Einar separated himself from the suite, went back alone to the church-yard took an axe out of the hands of a man, who had been there to attend divine service, and went to the south of the church.

Össur stood there leaning on his axe. Einar immediately inflicted a mortal wound on him and thereafter went in. The tables were now set, and Einar went straight opposite to where the bishop sat, without saying a word. Then Brand Thordsson came into the room, went up to the bishop and said:

"Hast thou been told anything new, my lord?" — The bishop had heard nothing.

"But what hast thou to relate?"

He answered:

"There was one who had to die out side here."

The bishop asked "Who did it? and who had to suffer?"

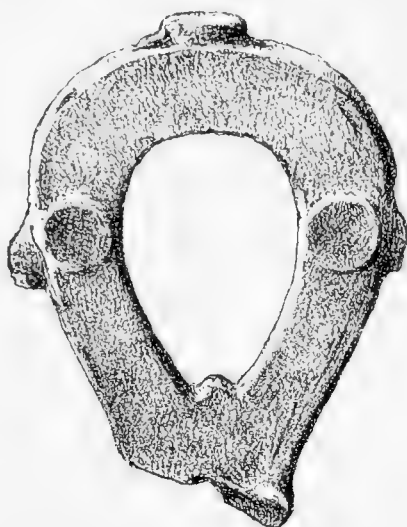
Brand answered, that he who could answer that was sitting close by. The bishop then asked:

"Didst thou, Einar, cause, — Össur's death?"

The answer was: "Yes certainly I caused it!"



Runic Tombstone  
from the Igaliko churchyard made of  
red sandstone (1,2 m long, 0,37 broad).  
The inscription is as follows: "Vigdis  
M's daughter rests here. God gladden  
her soul".



Fragments of a bronze eye of a church-  
bell (21,7 cm high), found at Igaliko.



(Th. Groth 1880)

Igaliko (Gardar).

*Ruin No. 2* (refer to page 89), built of big, red sandstone blocks with 2 covered entrances. (42 dan. ft. long, 19 broad. The wall 5 ft. high and 4 deep). In the background a Greenlander house is seen, built of stones from the Norseruins.

The bishop said to that:

"Such actions are not right, but this one can be excused."

Brand begged that the body might be washed and buried in a christian manner. The bishop answered, that he would give them time to do so. In the meantime they sat at table; but they did not hurry, and the bishop would not let them chant over the body before Einar desired it to be done, saying that it would be more becoming if it were done properly. The bishop answered, in the meantime, that he in reality thought it best that the body was not buried by the church. "But as thou desirest it, he shall be permitted to rest near this church, near which no priest has a dwelling."

The bishop did not call the priest to chant over the body, before it was attired in its grave-clothes. Then Einar said:

"Here a trick, has been played, most likely thy scheme; now we have to deal with insolent opponents and I suspect that great disasters soon will arise between us."

The bishop answered, that he hoped that they would repulse the insolence, and offer honourable recompense and awards in this case, if it was not brought too violently forward."

A certain *Simon*, Össur's relative was the proper revenger, but he seems to have lacked more sagacity and activity than strength.

Ketil Kalfsson was the most prominent man in the crew on Össur's ship, over which he now took command, since he began immediately to equip it for the return journey. He knew the laws of Greenland well, and let Simon carry through the lawsuit in this matter of man-slaughter.

At the assize — probably the land assize at Gardar — which most likely was held in the month of June, he was accompanied by Kolbein Thorliotsson and some of his people, as it had been agreed upon; but the trading ships with the rest of the men could not come so quickly to the eastern settlement as they were hindered by a contrary wind.

At the assize Einar Sokkisson by force disturbed the judicial proceedings, so that the strangers could not state their lawsuit. Through the intercession of the old highly esteemed Sokki Thorisson a new meeting of reconciliation was however appointed:

"At midsummer according to agreement, a reconciliation was to be contracted at Eid. Then the merchants came from the west and anchored by a headland [perhaps at the entrance to the east fiord] where they met all the others, and now a joint assignation was held. On this occasion Kolbein said that formerly it would not have been so near a reconciliation, if they had all been collected; "but my advice is that we all go to this meeting fully equipped." —

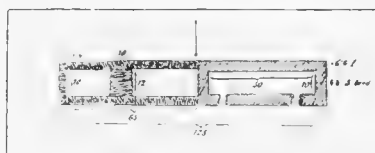
It took place, and they left, hiding themselves in a remote creek not far from the bishop's-see. Now it happened, that high mass was sung at the bishop's-see, at the same time as Einar Sokkisson arrived there. When the merchants heard it they said, that Einar was met





A general view.

(D. B. 1894)



(D. B. 1894)

The ground plan (in Danish feet).



The east end.

(K. I. V. Steenstrup)

The ruin on the skerries at Igaliko (Gardar).

(No. 18 on the map page 89).

with great honour, when the bells were rung to receive him. They thought it a great shame uttering their anger about it.

Ketil said: "Do not take it too much to heart, as before evening they may be funeral bells."

Then Einar came with his attendants; they sat down on the slope of a hill. Sokki laid out different chattels for valuation, which were appointed as damages.

Ketil said: "I desire that Hermund and I should value the goods." Sokki agreed.

Simon, Össur's relation, went about with a vexatious air, whilst the valuation of the chattels went on. Then an old armour-plating was brought forth. Simon then said: "It is an infamous bidding, for such a man as Össur to give." — He threw the armour away, out onto the plain, and went towards them who sat on the slope. When the Greenlanders saw that, they sprang up and went down the hill towards Simon — Kolbein then went up alone, past round to the rear of them attacking them from there. He gave Einar a blow between the shoulders, and Einar's axe hit Simon's head at the same time, so that they both received mortal wounds. Einar said as he fell: "Such could be expected." Now Thord, Einar's foster-brother, ran to Kolbein so as to cut him down, but Kolbein turned quickly and stuck the sharp point of the axe's blade into his throat so that he died at once. Now a hard fight set in, whilst the bishop sat with Einar, who died on his lap. A man called Steingrim now called upon the contenders to stop fighting, trying with a few men to separate them; but both parties were so furious that Steingrim was bored through by a sword in the heat of the battle.

Einar died upon the slope by the Greenlander's tent-booth. Now the people had heavy wounds, but Kolbein and his people reached the boats taking three of their fallen men with them."

They then went across Einarsfiord to Skialgsbudir. Here the trading-ships lay which were now quickly rigged.

Sokki now meditated on a universal attack on the ships and booths, but was persuaded, by a highly esteemed man in land called *Hall* on *Solarfiöll*, to give up that project and once more offer the strangers reconciliation.

A meeting was fixed under the preliminary assumption, that the strangers should leave the country as soon as possible and in any case before the end of a month — to be reckoned from Hall's visit to the ships. —

In the meantime Ketil took a trip with 30 men up into the settlement so as to procure provisions for the journey. They were so fortunate as to find such preserved in a big earth-house or cellar there; and they now took what they had need of.

At the peace-meeting Hall renounced, after mutual agreement, an award, and with that the matter ended.



(Knud Rasmussen 1905)  
Birch-wood in West-Greenland.



A big animal trap (K. I. V. Steenstrup)  
at Igaliko (The ancient Gardar) (refer to page 91).

In the meantime the coasts were blocked by ice, and the chances of getting away with the ships, were small; but suddenly the ice disappeared, so that the strangers got away. They reached Norway safe and sound in the autumn.

"Kolbein had had a polar bear with him from Greenland. He took the animal with him to King *Harald Gille*, to whom he stated that the Greenlanders deserved a serious chastisement. He severely slandered them, but when the king later on got to hear otherwise, Kolbein got nothing for his animal. Thereupon he ran over to SIGURD SLEMBIR's people, attacked King Harald Gille in his dwelling and wounded him. When the naval force later on sailed past the Danish coasts in a sharp breeze and at a great speed, Kolbein was in tow in a boat; but the rope broke and Kolbein drowned. *Hermund* and his crew came to their relations and property in Iceland. This saga ends thus."

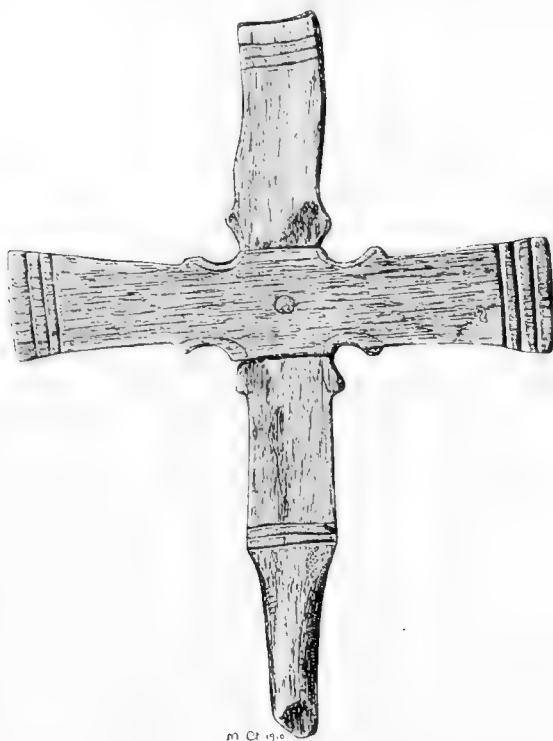
After that, this powerful and clever *Arnald* had been bishop in Greenland until 1150, he then returned to Norway and became *Head-Bishop of Hamar*.

From the moment Greenland had had a bishop, the power and influence, as far as one can see, glided more and more into their hands, and the Icelandic annals — which henceforth will principally be the place where we must search our knowledge of what took place in Greenland, contain almost only the tidings of the bishop's appointments, journeys to Norway, Iceland and Denmark, as well as their death — worldly chiefs are hardly mentioned.

Although the country was poor there were however collected crusade tithes. They were amongst other things, paid in walrus teeth, which were sent to Norway where *Bertrand de Ortolis* received the one half (1327) whilst the other half was left to King *Magnus Smek* as a help towards expenses of the war against the Russians. Also Peter's-pence was delivered on the same occasion from Greenland. In all 130 stone, teeth were received. On account of Greenland's poverty they were, a few years later, excused by the pope from an extraordinary tithe which had been enjoined upon them (1345). In any case christianity was in a sad state in the remotest countries. It is said that in 1342 many Greenlanders inclined to the belief of the Eskimoes, if one can rely on the communication, hardly others than those in very remote parts can be meant, where many Norsemen perhaps have risked their lives in Eskimoe-fashion as capturers.

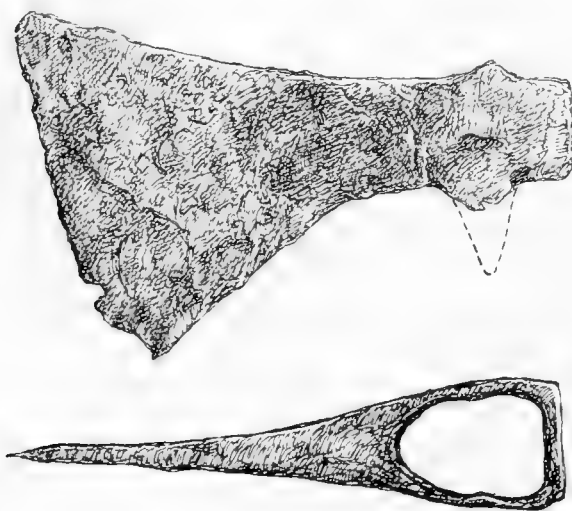
We also hear that King *Magnus Smek* in the year 1355 commanded the "Knarr" or trading ship, which sailed between Norway and Greenland, to be equipped, with the intention of supporting Greenland's christianity, which: "we cannot let decay in our days".

In 1347 the king and his queen *Blanca* bequeathed 100 marks to the ornamenting of the cathedral at Gardar; but it is doubtful as to it ever having received the gift.



(Mogens Clemmensen)

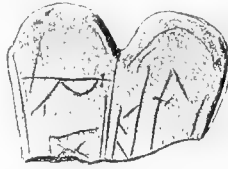
A wooden cross  
from a Norsegrave — Ikigait (the ancient Herjolfsness).  $\frac{1}{2}$  size.



(Mogens Clemmensen)

Axe found at Ericsfjord.  $\frac{1}{2}$  size.

The navigation became worse and worse, more and more seldom: in 1383 a ship came, for instance, to Norway, which announced that bishop ALF had been dead for six years. And it is easily understood that under these conditions there were only few who cared to go to Greenland as bishop. From 1349—68, therefore for 19 years, the country was without one — there were however continually appointed bishops, but most of them remained in other countries and never saw their See. Long after all connection between Greenland and Scandinavia was broken, we find entitled bishops, appointed from the first mentioned country. Thus was the case far into the 16th century — when for example, *Vincentius* was mentioned (about 1530).





A whale in the fiord Ameralik.

(D. B. 1903)

## Chapter IX.

### The decay of the Norse colonies.

**T**he *Greenland republic* continued to exist as such until the year 1261. Almost coincident with the Icelanders, who on account of violent mutual contentions, had to surrender themselves to the rule of the Norwegian King HAAKON THE ANCIENT, the Greenlanders also acknowledged him as their liege lord.

In the year 1257 three Norwegians travelled to Greenland so as to bring about a peaceful subjection, and they actually succeeded in making the Greenlanders render homage to the king.

That this could take place bears witness to the fact that the conditions of Greenland already at this juncture were not so good.

The Greenland people were obliged to pay taxes, also promise to pay fines to the king for the man-slaughter, which took place in their country, whether they were Norwegians or Greenlanders who were killed, and whether the deed was achieved in the settlements or the northern summer resorts. In consequence of the subjection BARD STURLA chanted, that the king reigned over such a kingdom as no other king had ruled before, and that his glory spread there where the sun no longer shone.

In Greenland they submitted to obey the Icelandic laws, and from the year 1281, the written Icelandic book of law, "*Jónsbook*" is said to have been in force, in Greenland. Like Iceland, Greenland still had in the 14th century its legislative assembly and was probably divided into jurisdictions.

But the qualifications for the thriving of the colonies became much slighter than formerly, and the conditions of livelihood became more

and more frugal; because communication with the surrounding world became more difficult.

Coincident with the Greenlanders going out on capture and fishing in the far parts of the ice-regions, they tried to maintain a communication with Iceland and Norway, all navigation to the last named country taking place after the year 1261. *The black death* which raged in Norway in the year 1349, devastated especially *Bergen*, and as this town was the principal seat of commerce with Greenland, all communication with this country declined, which was so much more fatal as King MAGNUS SMEK, the year before, had issued a serious prohibition against foreigners trading with Greenland. When King Magnus resigned the government of Sweden and Norway he had reserved for himself the income of Norwegian taxed countries. As he was afraid of Christianity being subjected to danger in Greenland he ordered a ship to be sent there. This was continued several years following, but as the king considered himself to be solely entitled to trading with Greenland, the connection became poorer and poorer, and in the year 1384 King OLUF issued another law which restricted further trading intercourse with Greenland. It went so far, that the crews of four Icelandic men, who were driven to Greenland by storm, and who had lived there a year, after returning home to Norway were prosecuted for unlawful trading, but they were acquitted.

The pest in Norway in 1392, the ruin of Bergen 1393 and the removal of the Norwegian government to Denmark, all influenced the injury to the maintenance of only a moderately regular navigation of Greenland. In the time of Eric of Pommern (1425) the prohibition was even more enforced against private sailing to Greenland; only the "*Knarr*", the king's own ship, was allowed to sail to that country; and there were often many years between the arrival of the ships, especially when they foundered.

If the *Knarr* failed to come, one was badly off in Greenland, as corn, iron, and much more, which was indispensable, had to be procured from Norway; but most frequently the Greenlanders had to do without corn. They were however easily contented and hardy, and although they were almost barred from all intercourse with the rest of the world, they procured food, and generation after generation lived on, but as they got no help or influence, either material or spiritual from the mother-country, their power of resistance became diminished and the inhabitants declined in every way, so that at last the Norwegian culture in Greenland succumbed to that of the *Skrællings*.

Although Greenland lies in the distant outskirts of the world, this country however had already been trod by human feet before either the Faroe islands or Iceland. They were as we now know, *Eskimoes*, who — coming from North America across the islands north of this part of the world — had reached Greenland, along which narrow, ice free coast-



land, indented by deep fiords, they wandered further risking their lives as seal capturers and hunters.

The Eskimoe's emigration to Greenland's ice free coasts seems to have taken place both down the west coast as well as north round the country and down the east coast. On the east coast Eskimoes are now only to be found at Angmagssalik but in 1323 the Englishmen SABINE and GLAVERING found a little troop since extinguished, right up on  $74\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  n. lat., traces of their having been over the whole east coast, have also been found by different travellers right up to Independence fiord ( $82^{\circ}$  n. lat.), where MYLIUS ERICHSEN found old summer tent places. The west coast is inhabited from the south end of the country to north of  $72^{\circ}$  n. lat., no habitations have been found from there to Cape York ( $76^{\circ}$  n. lat.) but at the south end of Smith Sound there is another troop, and traces of previous dwellings are still found further north.

When ERIK THE RED came to Greenland, he hardly met Eskimoes, as we know, but only traces of their having been there. Most likely the troops had already then begun their wandering down along Greenland's west coast and round Cape Farewell to the east coast, where Thorgils Orrabeinfostre seems to have met them.

First in the beginning of the 13th century one has more definite records to rely on. In "Historia Norvegiæ" (Storm's edition, page 76) we find:

"on the other side of the northern Greenlanders, hunters have found some small-folk whom they called Skrællings, and who, when wounded by weapons, whilst living, die without loss of blood, but whose blood when they are dead, will not stop flowing. They are altogether in want of iron, using walrus teeth as arrows and pointed stones as knives."

This is an interesting communication, as it shows us that the Eskimoes, at this juncture, were not in the parts, inhabited by Norsemen but well to the north of them. In the middle of the 13th century the Skrællings still lived far towards the north, on Greenland's west coast, which is proved in the records brought home in the year 1265 (1266) by the expedition previously mentioned.

One can reckon from about the middle of the 14th century that the Norsemen in Greenland were almost cut off from all active help from the country which ought to have supported them in their unequal fight against nature and the Skrællings, who now began to appear in the Norsemen's inhabited parts. Finally, in the course of the last half of the 14th century they came in contact with the Norsemen from the western settlement.

The result was that these people completely succumbed. About this is related the following according to IVAR BAARDSÖN, who in 1341 came to Greenland and who about 1370 returned to Norway:

"Now the Skrællings have the whole western settlement, there are

horses, goats, cattle, and sheep, but everything is wild, and no people, christian or heathen." [literally rendered] — — —

"All this, referred to, was related by the Greenlander IVAR BAARD-SÖN, who for many years was a superintendant at the bishop-see at Gardar in Greenland, having seen it himself, besides being one of them appointed by the "Lagmand" to go to the western settlement, to drive the Skrællings out of it, but when they got there, they found no people, neither christian nor heathen, but only some wild cattle and sheep. They fed themselves on the wild cattle and took as much as the ship could load and sailed home with it: the Ivar mentioned was with them."

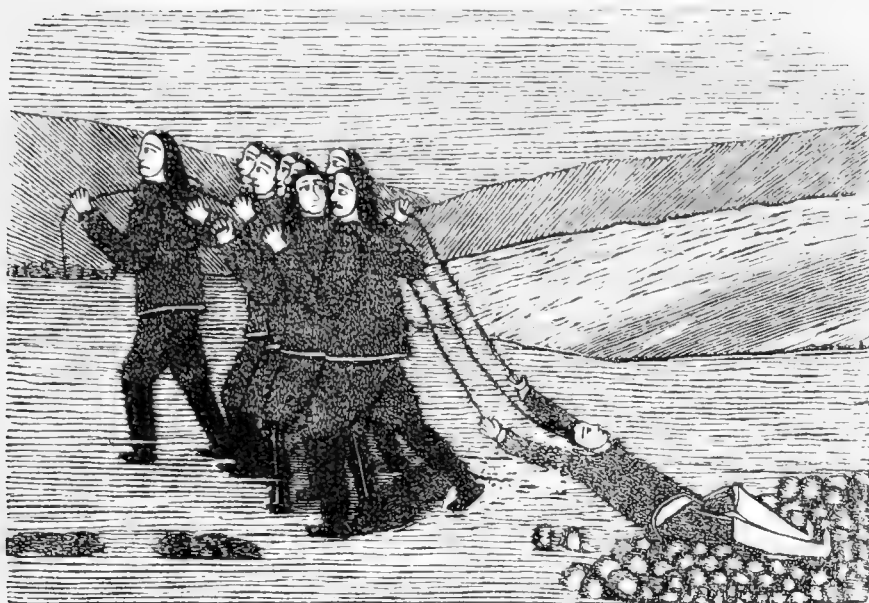
According to this communication one would suppose that the Skrællings had brought, all the Norsemen still to be found in the western settlement, to a violent end. Perhaps there were only a few left, and they themselves have in all probability in certain cases occasioned the contentions with the Skrællings, who now appeared on territory where the Norsemen previously had been sole-rulers.

On my journey in 1903 in the district of Godthaab, — the old western settlement's territory — I visited parts, where the tradition of fights between the Eskimoes and the Norsemen still prevail amongst the Eskimoes ("Greenlanders") of our day.

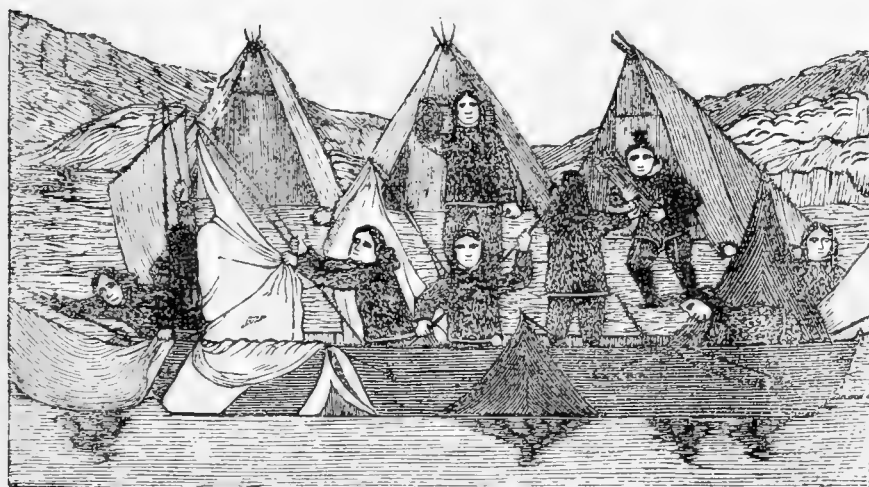
"In the beginning, after the forefathers of the last mentioned had come to the western settlement, they and the Norsemen lived — it is said — [in one of the legends recorded by the celebrated H. RINK] peacefully together; but subsequently disagreements arose — a woman was the cause — and the Norsemen attacked the tent-places in Godthaab's fiord in the neighbourhood of *Ujaragssuit*, where now the ruin of a Norse-church is to be found. The men were on a reindeer hunt, and the saga relates, that there the Norsemen attacked the women and killed them; only one of them escaped. Now the Skrællings decided to revenge themselves, so they made an "Umiak" which they covered with beautiful white skins, so that it should resemble a hummock of ice. A few dark skins were amongst them, and the boat was so arranged that it could turn over onto the one side, whilst the crew lay in the bottom of it.

When the boat was some distance from the land, it looked like a piece of ice without people, although it was filled with people, who could see everything that went on, through holes in the sides of the boat. When they let it capsize, it resembled a little [dirty] hummock of ice which had calved [i. e. broken off a glacier by the water] as its surface was alternately shining white and of a dusky hue.

The first trial of attack on the Norsemen failed, as they in the meantime had fled southwards to Ameralikfiord's head [Ameragdla] where they had joined their countrymen from other western settlement farms, as they thought they could better withstand the Skrællings when they were collected. Here the Eskimoes searched for them,



"Kavdlunait-sianik".



"Kavdlunait-sianik".

Episodes taken from the time of the extinction of the ancient Scandinavians near Godthaab. (Western settlement).

Specimens of modern engravings on wood taken from the book: "*Kaladlit Assi-lialiat*" printed by the Greenlander Lars Møller and R. Berthelsen in Godthaab 1860.

in their "Umiak" over which, naturally witchcraft had been practised by an Angekok [Eskimoe sorcerer], who went with them on the expedition. Whilst the boat now drifted before a slight westerly wind [in through Ameralikfiord's continuation, Ameragdla] they began to catch glimpses of the Norsemen, who every now and then came out of the house [The dwelling house on the Norse farm at Kilârsarfik, perhaps the same as Gudrid's farm in Lysefiord.] If one went in, another came out at once, so as to spy out across the fiord. One of them shouted so loudly so that it could be heard out on the fiord: "It is no boat only a hummock of ice."

The Norsemen kept no longer watch, and the Eskimoes reached land unhindered, where they immediately advanced for an attack. They filled the passages of the house with fuel and lighted it with the fire they had brought with them. The Norsemen naturally tried to get out, but some of them died in the flames and others were killed by arrows. One of the Norsemen, BIG OLAV who came home from the capturing of seals, carrying a big fiord seal, was also killed. He was, says the legend, the only one who went out capturing every day, whilst the others suddenly had begun to stay at home fearing the Skrællings. The Norsemen's chieftain *Ungortok* was not killed as yet. He succeeded, with a son in his arms, in jumping out through an opening in the house-wall ("window"). He was persued and when he saw that he could do no more, he kissed his son and threw him into a lake. He succeeded in escaping, from Ameralik to the eastern settlement where he attached himself to his countrymen living there.

Another Norseman, one of the servants, also escaped. He had gone on board a craft, having light sails and was about to weigh anchor, when the Eskimoes heard his song. When they came towards him he shouted loudly: "When it blows gently in the morning at Big-Ameralik, then there generally rises an east wind;" shortly after he cried dolefully: "Ah you beautiful wood-clad slopes."

Now the east wind blew up, and he — the last Norseman in Ameralik — swept out of the fiord.

This interesting legend surely gives, in the main point, a real picture of the last of the Norsemen's existence in the western settlement.

At one time they lived peacefully together with the Eskimoes, which they easily could do, as the Norsemen's livelihood principally bound them to the innermost of the fiords, whilst the habits of the Skrællings necessitated their winter-dwellings being out on the coast. Subsequently the contentions arose (about women, reindeer hunting-territories in the interior etc?) and the Norsemen, who on account of the long separation from their native land had become demoralized, whose supply of iron for weapons, and the like, most probably was coming to an end, did not by far, possess the same ability of hunting from a kayak, as the Eskimoes, or the skill in the making and use of new weapons,



“Kavdlunaitsonianik”.

Episode taken from the time of the extinction of the ancient Scandinavians near Godthaab. (Western settlement).



“Okalugtuak Ungilagtakimik”.

Concerning Ungilagtake, a cruel manslayer on the coast opposite Greenland.

Specimens of engravings on wood taken from the book “*Kaladlit Assilialiait*”.

drew closer and closer together, ending in the richest and most fertile parts at the head of *Lysufjord*, now Ameralik, where they at last were vanquished.

The Greenlander LARS MØLLER, the well known printer, editor and lithographer, told us in 1903 that at one place, now called *Niakússat* on the north side of Ameragdla, where one sees sites of Norse ruins, human craniums were found, a few years ago the Greenlander JOEL (formerly Nansen's companion now ours) had found two skulls of Norsemen ("*Kablunaks*"), in which there still stuck points of stone arrows. These last mentioned, which Lars Møller had seen, had been fetched by a Moravianhut-missionary, who soon after left the country with these interesting objects. Perhaps they had something to do with the last Norsemen in the western settlement, who were killed by the Skrællings. The discovery would in this case corroborate the above rendered Greenland legend, about the last act of "the western settlement's ruin", taking place in Ameragdla. It was not possible to substantiate with certainty a Norse churchyard, so it must be assumed that those killed were left where they fell. That the Skrællings did not take their arrows out again is easily explained by the Greenlanders usual horror of touching anyone dead.

The western settlement, where in the colony's days of vigour there had been ninety farms, possibly with a population of about one thousand persons, was a thing of the past. Ameralikfjord's fine grass and wood-clad valleys and slopes echoed no longer the bleating of sheep or the bellowing of oxen, and smoke rose no more from the numerous Norse farms. The houses collapsed, and on the homefields the grass was allowed to grow freely; but even now, a good five hundred years later, the ground here is covered with grass and flowers, which otherwise is not to be found outside the home-fields, here and there one still gets glimpses of dwelling-houses and stables which form eminences under the luxuriant grass. But up on the slopes the folds are still seen, where the sheep were milked and the lambs separated from them, even in some places the ruins of a few stone houses, still stand which probably were used as forrage houses. And in the narrow valleys, edged by the inland ice, where Eskimoe reindeer hunters now wander about during the summer, miles away from their home — one finds at long intervals grass-grown spots with a vegetation which the now-a-day Skrællings well know to originate from the Norse-times. Also here perhaps a few sites are to be seen commemorative of the Norsemen having their outfarms here during the summer, but further in, by lakes and rivulets the remains of huts are seen, where they stayed for the sake of salmon-fishing, like in the highlands right by the edge of the inland ice one finds old shooting-dams behind which they lay in wait for reindeer, and huts in which they lived, huts, which partly resemble those which are still used for sheep in the south of Iceland. They are shaped like a bee-hive erected



The return after reindeer-hunting near Godthaab.

(D. B. 1903)

in vaults stone upon stone. These capturing-huts are still used to a certain extent by Greenlanders when out hunting.

One can not refrain from thinking that perhaps just the possession of these hunting-grounds was the cause of the contentions between Europeans and the natives.

It is probable that the Norsemen in Greenland had already in the 14th century, become intellectually degraded on account of their isolated position.

In an Icelandic transcript of lost sources, it is thus written for the year 1342.

"Greenland's inhabitants left of their own accord the true belief and the christian religion, and lay aside all good customs and true virtues and turned to the American people [i. e.: to Eskimoe heathenism]."

According to this, one would almost think that many of the Norsemen — perhaps in the more remote regions — had begun to be merged in the Skrælling's association, trying to support life as they did.

Norway could not have been ignorant of the danger the Greenland colonies were exposed to, and one can see that they — most likely through a religious reason — did their best to maintain navigation to that country.

In the year 1355 the "Knarr" was sent out, after not having visited Greenland for nine years (the time of the black death) so as to hinder:

"that christianity should decline".

In 1367 Bishop ALF went to Greenland, after their having no bishop for nineteen years; he died in 1377 and was the last Greenland bishop, who had lived in the country, and we hear that an old priest occupied the bishop-see from the year 1385.

It is said that in the year 1379 the Skrællings "had laid waste" the Greenlanders, killed eighteen men and took two boys away in thralldom.

This was probably the first conflict between the people in the eastern settlement and the Eskimoes. There is an account about the well known Icelfander BIÖRN JORSALFAR, who, during two years (1385—87) had to stay in Greenland:

"At last chance helped him, as he saved two gnomes, (Eskimoes), a young brother and sister, from a point flooded by a lake at high tide. They swore fidelity to him, and from that time on he was not in want of provisions, as they were skilled in hunting of every description in whatever he wished or needed. The gnome girl considered it the greatest honour, when she was allowed to carry and pet the infant boy, which the mistress had lately born. She also wanted to wear a head-dress like her mistress's, but she made it of whale bowels. The brother and sister killed themselves, by jumping from a rock into the sea, as they were not allowed to go with farmer Biörn their beloved master, to Iceland."

This somewhat embellished record shows at least, that the inter-





(W. Thalbitzer 1906)

An Eskimoe house ruin Angmagssalik (East-coast).



(A. Jessen 1894)

Greenlandic winter houses at Nanortalik (West-coast).

course between Eskimoes and Greenlanders could be impressed by milder feelings. The accounts in the meantime become more and more scarce. In 1407 a man was burnt in Greenland for having enticed another's wife by magic art. In 1408 the Greenland official executed a wedding ceremony in *Hvalsey-church* in the eastern settlement. In 1410 we hear for the last time of a ship coming home from there, and from now on darkness spreads over the colony.

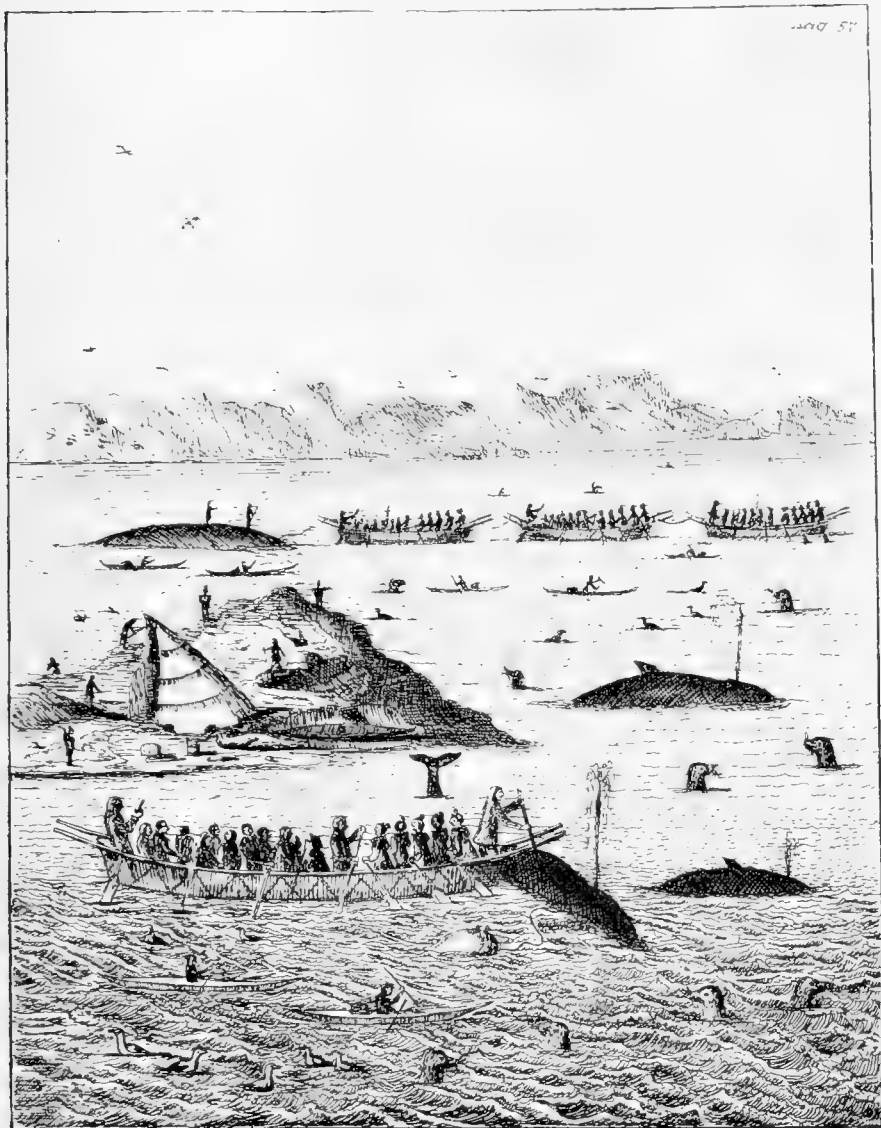
In a papal letter, from 1448 a description is given of the colony's condition and its disorganization in 1418, after an attack of the "heathen fleet", and thereafter the following want of priests. But, as A. BJÖRNBO says, this record showed itself in such essential points to be founded upon false notes given by two deceitful priests, so that one dares not rely on them.

Besides there is only one single valuable communication in the time between 1410 and 1492. It dates from the Danish Chartographer CLAUDIUS CLAVUS, Greenland's first charterer (b. 1388). He says he has seen "the unbelieving Karels" (i. e.: Eskimoes) come with a numerous army down to Greenland, undoubtedly from the other side of the north pole. He says nothing about the colonists, and his Greenland names of places are feigned. He had not visited Greenland himself.

A glimpse in the darkness, which enveloped the last period of the Greenland colony's history, is exhibited through a papal letter, which a catholic priest has brought to light several years ago. The letter is from 1492 — the celebrated year in which Columbus discovered America. It is remarkable to ascertain, that just at this juncture one seems to have got news in the south from the new world's most northern part.

"It is said that Greenland is an island lying at the end of the world, that the inhabitants there have no bread, wine nor oil, but live on dried fish and milk. On account of the surrounding ice, navigation to this island is seldom, and landing can only take place in August, after the melting of the ice; therefore one believes that no ship, in the last eighty years has been there, nor that a bishop or priest has lived there. And the consequence has been, that the most of the inhabitants have fallen away from the christian belief and have no other memorandum of it than that once a year an alter-cloth (corporale) is shown, which had been used by the last bishop about 100 years before. Now, on the appeal of the then Cardinal BORGAS, the Benedictine monk MATHIAS had offered to go as missionary to that country so as to convert the apostates, and had wished to risk both life and health on this enterprise by personally travelling there by ship."

The letter thus insinuates that news of the country had been brought from Greenland to Europe, and its contents clearly bear witness of the state of decomposition which prevailed in the Norse colonies (i. e.: the eastern settlement). There can hardly be any doubt as to the correctness of the letter's contents.



The Greenlander's (Eskimoe's) whale-fishery.  
(according to Hans Egède).

Dr. phil. LOUIS BOBÉ has recently found a document in the state-archives in Copenhagen (confer "Danish Magazine" fifth row VI) which decidedly points out, that shortly before the death of Christian I (1481) there had been sent an expedition to Greenland which had brought news home from there. In the letter written to King Christian III it is mentioned that his grandfather had sent DIDRIK PINING out, who was Admiral and governor in Iceland, together with POTHORST and several ships, on the Portugese king's appeal so as to find new islands and countries. It adds, that Pining had from, a station he had raised on the mountain Hvitsærk in Greenland, fought the Greenland sea-robbers who made the sea dangerous with their small boats without a keel (skin-boats).

Biörnbo says, that if one confronts this with the circumstance that an old record had been found on the Faroe islands, through which PURCHAS announces that Pining and Pothorst, who lived for some years in Iceland, every now and then sailed over there and carried on trade in Greenland, so there is reason to believe that a Danish-Iceland state expedition has been in Greenland and carried on barter with the inhabitants, which at times has been broken off by contentions.

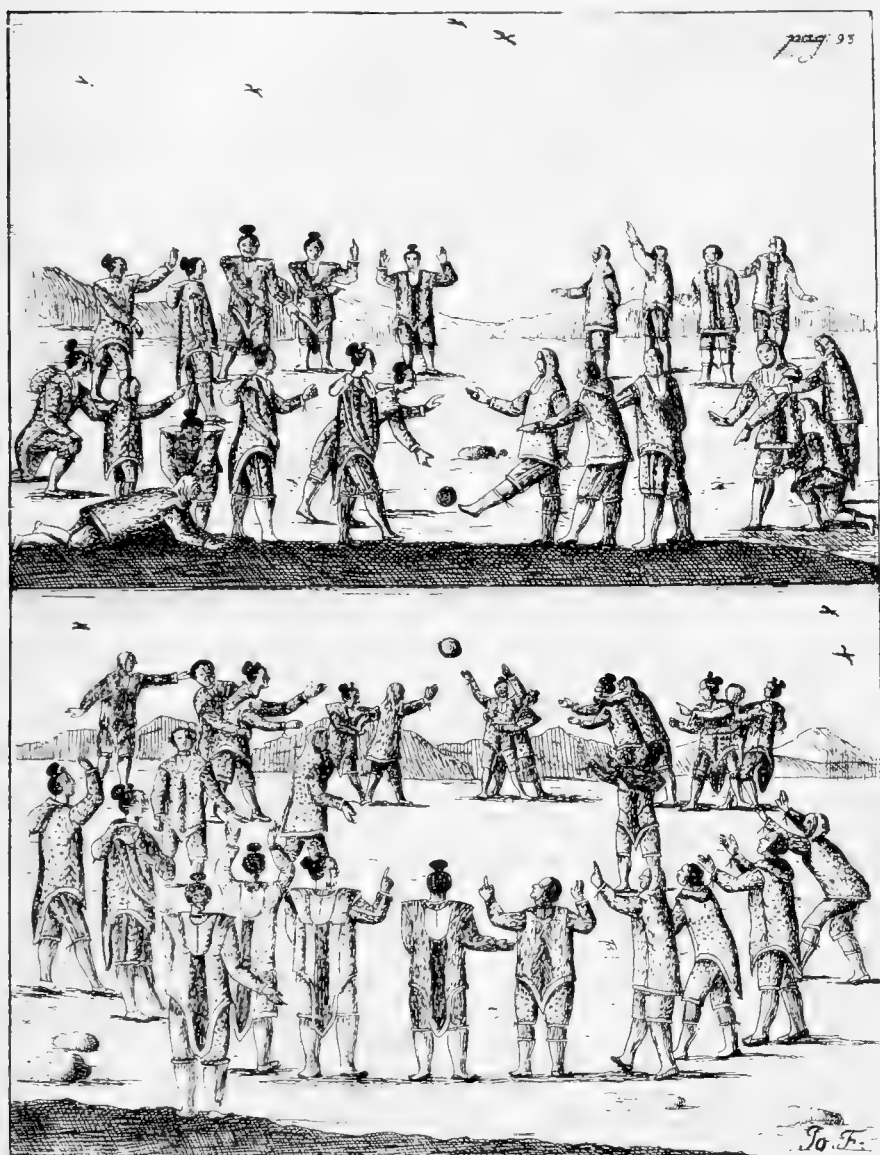
It is not impossible, that Pining's expedition is the same as the one referred to by some people in the year 1476, and where mate JOHAN SCOLVUS is then mentioned as leader. This would in any case fit in with Christian I year of death (1481) also that Didrik Pining was mentioned as governor in Iceland in the year 1478. In one single information it is said that they, on the expedition lead by Scolvus came to Labrador; but the conceptions of Greenland and Labrador for a long time were mixed up, so it hardly signifies that the last named country really was reached.

There is no proof of Columbus having known anything about the geographical discoveries the Norsemen had made in Vineland, or of the later voyages of discovery in the ice regions, up to the one in 1476, which was undertaken at the instigation of the King of Portugal.

The same concerns JOHN CABOT who undertook his great voyage of discovery to north America in 1497. One does not know how far the trial, to reunite the connection with the colonies in Greenland was made, in response to the papal letter already mentioned. It is not unlikely that an expedition went out to Greenland, exactly in the same year as Columbus went out on his great expedition of discovery.

In Denmark and Norway the Norse-colonies in Greenland were not quite forgotten, and the wish to re-establish the connection was not wanting, but there it ended; as all navigation there was hardly known any longer. It is said, that the German merchants in Bergen in the year 1484 suddenly killed about forty seamen, the only ones, who at that time, knew the navigation of Greenland.

Whether this communication is true or not, is a question, but in



The Greenlander's (Eskimoe's) ball-game  
(according to Hans Egede).

any case the Archbishop ERIC WALKENDOFF tried, in the beginning of the 16th century to equip an expedition to re-discover Greenland. He collected all possible accounts about navigation to the country, but he incurred disgrace. King Christian II took up the plan himself, and SÖREN NORDBY was to have left from Bergen, but the trial was not made, as the king had to flee from the country. Possibly one might have been able, once more to have found the last Norsemen in the eastern settlement. The western settlement had long ago been laid waste. — But when at last the search took place it was too late.

All reliable accounts, of the last fate of the old Norsemen, have now disappeared. The present Greenlander's legend says, that the last "Kablunaks" who lived in the eastern settlement were killed by their forefathers. One of the legends concerns the island Akpaitevik (Apaitsevik or Arpatsivik) in Kakortokfiord.

"Long after the old Kablunaks [i. e.: Greenlanders of Norwegian birth] had been exterminated in the rest of Greenland, they still held out in *Kakortokfiord* [Hvalseyarfiord] where the church especially served them as a place of refuge. They here had a master or chieftain, whom the Greenlanders [i. e.: Eskimoes] named *Ungortok* or *Ongartok* [refer to the saga of Ameralikfiord]. Although the understanding between the Kablunaks and the Greenlanders was not of the best, they lived however for a long time peacefully in the neighbourhood of each other. But at last an event occurred which was the cause of a bloody feud and which ended with the complete destruction of the old Kablunaks. A Greenlander from the neighbouring Arpatsivik had namely, rowed out in his kayak so as to try some new casting — arrows. As he rowed past a little point which in the neighbourhood of the ruins juts out into the fiord, a young Kablunak sat down by the shore and watched how the Greenlander missed with his bird-arrows. He immediately began, to shriek like an auk, so as to scorn him, and to shout to the Greenlander: "Try if thou canst hit me!" He did not require being told this twice, he aimed at the Kablunak and wounded him mortally. Ungortok submitted to this, when he heard the facts of the death. But it did not last long before a Greenlander with rapid and quiet oar strokes stole in to another one of the tribe and likewise killed him. Now Ungortok became enraged and swore to take vengeance on his Greenland neighbours. They lived on the west side of Arpatsivik — —

So, in order as to surprise them, Ungortok rowed with all his people, on a moonlight night in the autumn, over to the east side of the island and then went in silence over the fairly high mountain which stood in the middle of the island. They reached a lake unperceived on the west side but here they were discovered by a Greenland girl who had gone out to fetch water. She became aware of their elongated shadows on the surface of the lake, hastening to her countrymen she gave alarm. Some of the Green-



(J. N. Nielsen)

A Skrælling of to-day with his draught of halibut.  
His line lies rolled together on the fore deck. Agdluilsok. (Julianehaab District).

landers succeeded in saving themselves by flight; but those left behind had to lay down their lives. This sad lot specially befell all the women and children,—and now the Greenlanders prepared themselves for a whole winter, to be revenged. When spring came and the wind according to custom still blew into the fiords, the Greenlanders rowed unnoticed from Narsak, round the land on which the colony Julianehaab lies at present. But as soon as they had reached the mouth of Kakortokfiord, they lay in their oars and let the boats drift before the wind, which bore straight onto the dwellings of the Kablunaks. They noticed the “Umiak” (a boat rowed by women), approaching the fiord, came out of their houses put their hands to their foreheads and looked across the fiord. But being deceived by the shining white colour of the “Umiak” they took the Greenlanders’ crafts for floating pieces of ice and went again into their houses without any misgiving. During the night the Greenlanders landed in a bay a few gun-shots away from the present ruins, where the coast was, and still is, vastly overgrown by the so called heather and the juniper berry. They collected a lot of this, which they used to bar all the entrances to the Kablunaks’ houses, and thereafter set them on fire. The inhabitants, who all lay in their deepest sleep, were burned except Ungortok, who with his son, a little boy, under his arm sprang out of one of the windows in the burning church and escaped eastwards. The Greenlanders pursued him in the beginning, but all except one, gave up the pursuit by degrees, Ungortok reached the eastern end of the so-called church mountain, without the Greenlanders, who were armed with bows and arrows, being able to come within shooting distance. But Ungortok was much too exhausted from running, with his burden, to be able to escape to the mountains. He therefore ran for a time round a lake there, so as to avoid his obstinate pursuer. At last he saw he would be obliged to throw his son into the lake so as to save his own life. He succeeded for the present. He escaped to Igaliko, from where he escaped further south.”

Now an account follows relating how his hiding places were discovered and he himself assailed.

“Later on a Greenlander (whose brother had been killed by Ungortok, slashed by his axe at the attack on Arpatsivik) succeeded in hitting him with a magic arrow, made of the extremest cross-piece of a barren woman’s hip-bone. Thus died the last of the old Kablunaks.”

According to another Eskimoe legend the last Kablunak at Igaliko, was called *Olave* or *Olavik* [evidently Olaf], and it is said he was so strong that he was able to carry a walrus on his back or a fullgrown “Svartside” (Greenland seal) under each arm. This Olave was very rich and had many cows.

These legends, whereof the one about Ungortok, is evidently closely connected with the one already mentioned from the western settlement, clearly shows the manner in which the Norsemen were killed by degrees





"Ongortumik". (Eastern settlement).



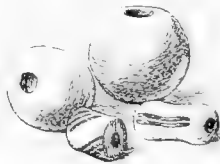
"Ongortumik". (Western settlement).

Episodes taken from the time of the extinction of ancient Scandinavians.

Specimens of engravings on wood, taken from the book „*Kaladlit Asslialiait*”.

— not through big battles between the members of the races, but by single attacks and slaughter — exactly like the Eskimoes at Angmagsalik on the east coast behaved to each other, until they recently were influenced by the Danes.

The Norse colonies were destroyed, and the Skrællings for a time were sole masters in Greenland. After the discovery of America in 1492 one soon began to search a sea-route to India round the north of America, and the sea journeys stretched as far as the ice-regions. The Portuguese GASPAR CORTE-REALL reached as far as Greenland's east coast in the year 1500; but henceforth until 1576 one knows nothing certain of any European ship having either seen or visited Greenland. It was the Englishman MARTIN FROBISHER who then sighted Greenland's east coast. One of his ships meanwhile foundered in the ice, and landing was prevented by the arctic ice. He again, in 1577, attempted, in vain, to land on the east coast, but in the year 1578 he landed on the west coast, without however having a clear understanding of it being Greenland. He found that the Eskimoes were in possession of some metal instruments, by which he concluded that they had intercourse with strangers. In 1579 a Danish expedition was on the east coast of Greenland; it was conducted by the Englishman JACOB ALLDAY, but it did not reach land. In 1581 the Faroese MAGNUS HEINESSEN tried in vain to reach the east coast. At last in the year 1585 the Englishman JOHN DAVIS landed on Greenland's west coast (on  $64^{\circ}15'$  lat) where he met Eskimoes, but no Norsemen. In 1605—1607 three ships were sent to Greenland by King Christian IV. They took possession of the west coast under the Danish crown, but first, when HANS EGEDE in 1721 landed in Greenland so as to preach christianity to the descendants of the Norsemen, whom he hoped to find, but did not succeed, the *present colonization of Eskimoes in Greenland* was founded.





An old-fashioned farmstead in Iceland, with walls of turf (D. B. 1909)  
(a diary-sketch).

## Chapter X.

### The Norse Ruins.

**D**uring the first period after the re-discovery of Greenland, nobody doubted that both the eastern and western settlements had lain to the west of Greenland's south point, as it is shown on SIGURD STEFANSSON'S map from 1570 (90) and Hall's map from 1605. By a mistake, which has been pointed out by K. J. V. STEENSTRUP, arisen through a Greenland map prepared by Bishop THORD THORLAKSSON in 1668—69, the eastern settlement was moved over to the east coast where, later on, investigators and explorers thought they ought to search it. The first time ruins are mentioned after the re-discovery of Greenland — certainly only transitory — was in CHRISTIAN LUNDS reports to King Frederic III concerning DAVID DANELL'S journeys to Greenland in 1625 and 1653.

HANS EGEDE who came to Greenland in 1721, was, meanwhile, the first to acknowledge the remains of houses, etc., which were to be found in west Greenland, to be *Norse ruins*: but he believed that it was exclusively a question of the western settlement and he thought that the eastern settlement lay on Greenland's east coast, where he decided to search it. For that reason he undertook in 1723 a journey, for if possible, to get round Cape Farewell, onto the east coast; but he did not even reach that point, as the Greenlanders (Eskimoes) would not go further with him than to Nanortalik. He inspected several ruins, in the present district in Julianehaab, such as, amongst others, the church at

Kakortok (Hvalsey church). He also found more ruins in Godthaab's district. The first he saw were in Ameralikfiord. Egede persuaded some young men to come from Norway to Greenland as colonists.

Amongst them was PEDER OLSEN from Hvalö in Finmark, also called WALLÖE, who in the years 1751 to 1753 undertook, for the Greenland committee and mission college, his well known voyages of discovery in southern Greenland, which he reached, south round Cape Farewell, and a little way up the east coast to Nenese. He described the most important ruins in Tunugdliarfik, Agdluitsokfiord, Ûnartokfiord and a part of Igalikofiord.

Another of the Norwegian colonists was ANDERS OLSEN, who became a merchant in Greenland and who founded Julianehaab, and a cattle-breeding farm at Igaliko, where his descendants still live. He was the first peasant of more recent times in Greenland. He inspected many ruins.

Regarding the Godthaab district the Iceland-born Dean E. THORHALLESEN, published in the year 1776 an interesting little book "*Efterretning om Rudera*". (Accounts of Rudera or the remains of the ancient Iclander's dwellings on Greenland's west coast). He mentions various ruins in it, partly in the region of Godthaab, which he had seen himself, and partly in the region of Julianehaab, which he chiefly describes through observations made by Anders Olsen.

After the Julianehaab colony had been established, merchant ANDREAS BRUHN and the commercial assistant AARON ARCTANDER, who were sent out by the commercial committee, undertook a reconnoitring journey to Julianehaabs-district (1777—79). They described numbers of ruins, and amongst others, the very remote ones lying at the inner end of Amitsuarssuk-fiord, as well as those which lie in Kordlortok-valley between Tunugdliarfikfiord and Tasiussak which were first visited by other Europeans about one hundred years later.

It was on the basis of the investigations of these men that HEINRICH PETER VON EGGERS, who did not visit Greenland himself, in 1792 pointed out the situation of the eastern settlement in Julianehaab's region and the western settlement in Godthaab's region. Although his theory was strongly attacked later on, it has however in the main stood the test. At this juncture, seven churches in all had been found on Greenland's west coast, whilst only three or four were mentioned in the western settlement. Solely for this reason the eastern settlement had also to be placed on the west coast.

The well known mineralogist GIESECKE who travelled in Greenland (1806—13) mentions ruins in many places, and the Iclander SIGURDUR BREIDFJÖRD, who was a cooper in Greenland (1831—35), mentioned in his book "*From Greenland*", which was published in Copenhagen in 1838, that the Norse ruins in Greenland bore witness of the farms resembling those he knew in Iceland.

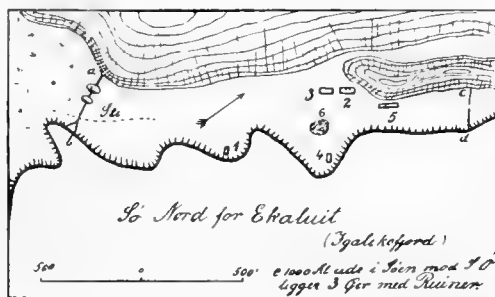
Ruin-group (No. 24) at Ivssormiut Tunugdliarfik.  
(Eastern settlement).



(D. B. 1894)

9. Dwelling-house. 3, 5. Stables with hay-barns. 10. Little house.  
6, 8. Store-houses. 1, 2, 4. Small out-houses. 11. Store-house. 7. Large fold.

The ruins lie close to an old river bed through which only little water runs at present. Formerly a big river has had its outlet here, now it discharges further north. The ruins lie on a beautiful coastal plain with grass and an abundance of willow-thicket. This home-field is bounded to the south by a fence made of earth with a few stones.



(D. B. 1894)

Ruin-group (No. 76) at the lake lying north of Ekaluit.  
(Igalikoford, Eastern settlement).

The home-fields lie between the lake and the mountains enclosed by the fence, a, b, c.

1, 4: Small houses. 2, 3, 5: Stables with barns. 6: Group of dwelling-houses.

In a south easterly direction three small islands with a few house ruins lie in the lake, between 6—700 meters from the farmstead.

In "Greenland's historical memorial works" C. C. RAEN maintained that Egger's theory was right. He was confirmed in this, especially by the naval officer, Captain A. V. GRAAH not having found ruins on Greenland's east coast when on his expedition (1829—32) and again after different men, who were attached to Greenland, had undertaken investigations and excavations especially in Julianehaabs district.

J. J. A. WORSAAE described everyone of the known ruins in this work from the material in hand. From 1845, when it was finished and right up to *The commission for the geological and geographical investigations in Greenland* ("*Kommissionen for de geologiske og geografiske Undersogelser i Grønland*") which was formed (1876) on Professor F. JOHNSTRUPS initiative, no essentially new accounts of Norse ruins were produced.

H. RINK who was highly merited for his investigations of Greenland, lived there for twenty years (from 1848) as inspector and later on as director for the royal Greenland commerce, being also greatly interested in the ruins; he also sided with Eggers' theory.

After the first expedition, sent out by the Greenland commission, under the geologist K. J. V. STEENSTRUP (assisted by First Lieutenant in the navy GUSTAV HOLM and cand. polyt A. N. KORNERUP) had in 1876 occasionally drawn and surveyed some few Norse ruins, the above mentioned First Lieutenant (now director pilot and commodore) Holm got in 1880, together with others, the task of undertaking some excavations and make ground-plans of the groups of ruins in Julianehaab's district. He was accompanied by Architect GROTH and by cand. polyt C. PETERSEN. They carried out a very meritorious work, in making a plan of the country over a number of the most important groups of ruins, as well as their undertaking some excavations.

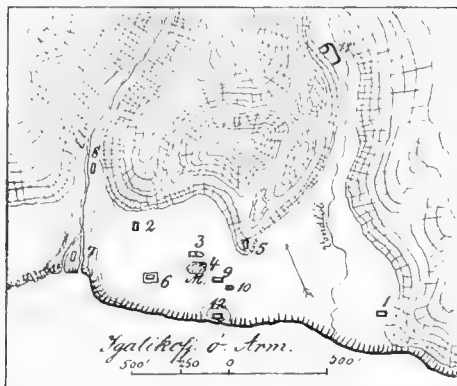
At the American congress in 1883 in Copenhagen, STEENSTRUP summed up the achieved results. In the same year the Swede Baron ADOLF NORDENSKIÖLD undertook his renowned Greenland expedition on board the ship "Sofia". He was altogether disinclined to consider some of the ruins discovered in Julianehaab's district to be of Norwegian origin, he supposed them sooner to date from Dutchmen, who had visited the country. There was no doubt in the scientific world of his view being quite without foundation. He was of the opinion that he had seen Norwegian ruins at Angmagssalik, and he took up afresh the idea of the eastern settlement's lying on Greenland's east coast.

Meanwhile when GUSTAV HOLM and first lieutenant (now commodore) T. V. GARDE just at this period (1883—85) undertook their Umiak-expedition, from the south point of Greenland, up along the east coast, where Holm found Eskimoes at Angmagssalik, without their having found Norse ruins anywhere; the question as to where the eastern settlement had lain, had to be irrevocably answered that it had lain on the west side.

Ruin-group (No. 64) at Inugkuagsak (Inorkuatsak?)  
(Igalikofiords eastern arm).

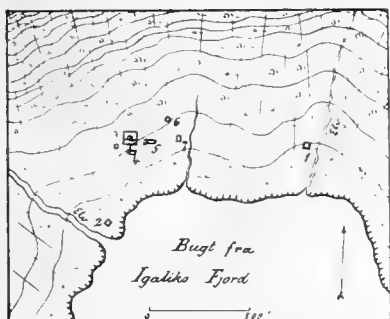
The ruins lie near the mouth of a big river coming from the inland-ice. Most of the ruins lie on an ancient sea margin with a level surface. About 15 m above the level of the sea.

1: A square compartment with a smaller enclosure. 2, 3: Stables. 4: Dwelling-houses with a refuse-heap. 5: A fold. 6: A stable. 7, 8: Small ruins near the river in the valley. 9, 10: Enclosures or houses near the dwelling. 11: In the valley to the north of the ruins lies a large fold with a little enclosure inside.



(D. B. 1894)

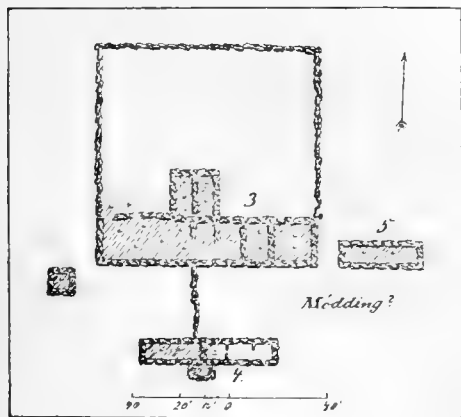
Ruin-group (No. 63) Iterdlak.  
(Igalikofiords eastern arm).



The ruin lies between a bigger river (to the west) and a brook (to the east). The home-field resembles a meadow which is watered by smaller streams. The ruins are very colapsed.

1, 2: Folds. 3: Dwelling-houses with a refuse-heap (= Mødding). 4: Stable for the milking cattle (?). 5, 9, 7: Smaller houses (store-houses etc).

(D. B. 1894)



In Godthaab's district (western settlement) at that time first lieutenant (now commodore and director of navigation) J. A. D. JENSEN (now BILDSÖE) and at that time first lieutenant (now the director of the meteorological institute, captain) C. RYDER, occasionally observed Norse ruins on their expeditions in the eighties, the last named made a catalogue of the ruins, then known in Godthaab's fiords, on the basis of the records by the well known Greenland catechist SAMUEL KLEIN-SCHMIDT.

In spite of all these investigations in the old Norse settlements in Greenland they did not succeed in gaining full evidence as to what each group of ruins meant. They had found various churches, and in addition, indicated that some of the ruins were stables, others pens, etc., but they did not succeed in substantiating a single dwelling, and they were not at all certain about the arrangements of the farms.

Meanwhile the Iclander VALTÝR GUDMUNDSSON wrote a treatise "The private dwellings in Iceland in the saga age", which he justified for a philosophical Doctor's degree at Copenhagen's university. Through this treatise one got a clear conception of what the farms and especially *the dwellings* looked like in the saga age — and especially those in Iceland. With regard to Greenland, Steenstrup and Holm had already a supposition that the dwellings ought to be sought amongst the badly dilapidated ruins in the groups and not, as it had been so far assumed, amongst the best preserved.

In 1894 I, the author of this book, was charged by the Greenland commission to undertake archæological investigations in Julianehaab's district, with the special task of solving the dwelling question through excavations.

It was apparent, as one may suppose, that the dwellings as well as the farms were of a pronounced Icelandic type.

In the course of the summer investigations were undertaken in the centre of the old eastern settlement, namely in the following fiords: *Sermilik* (Icefiord), *Tunugdliarfik* (Eriestfiord) and *Igalikofjord* (Einarsfiord) besides the interjacent parts being visited. More extensive excavations were undertaken in the dwellings at *Kagssiarssuk* in Tunugdliarfik (Eric the Red's farm Brattahlid), at *Igaliko* (the ancient bishop-see Gardar), at *Kagssiarssuk* in Igaliko-fiord's eastern arm (the Norse farm undir Höfda) besides a few other places in Sermilik and Tunugdliarfik.

Through these excavations the dwelling question was solved. At the same time surveying sketches were made of many ruin-groups, which until then had not been found or otherwise mentioned.

First lieutenant (now ambassador in Berlin) Count CARL MOLTKE was in the same year in Julianehaab's district, with an expedition. He was accompanied by the geologist (now state geologist) A. JESSEN and first lieutenant FRODE PETERSEN (now Captain FRODA). Moltke's expedition assisted at its conclusion, the archeological investigations. Peter-



sen surveyed thus some few ruins in the fiords lying nearer south of Juli-anehaab.

After the dwellings had been found amongst the Greenland Norse-ruins, it was not difficult to supply the whole of the farm contrivances (more of which later on).

By comparing the ruin-groups now found, with the most reliable original texts — partly in the Landnamabook, partly in two fiord inventories, which were later copied by BIÖRN JÓNSSON and ARNGRIMUR JÓNSSON, originating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, also Greenland's description from the 14<sup>th</sup> century by IVAR BAARDSÖN, and finally in a special church inventory in the *Flateybook* — Professor FINNUR JÓNSSON was able to identify fiords and farms, in "Grønlands gamle Topografi efter Kilderne" (in „Meddelelser om Grønland" XX). Egger's theory on the whole still held good. The position of Battahlid was an essential alteration, it was now moved to the west side of Tunugdliarfik (at Kagssiarssuk) instead of like previously, at Igaliko in the fiord of the same name. Here moreover the bishop-see Gardar undoubtedly had existed.

The author had meanwhile, after the investigations in Greenland in 1894, during the following years visited *Norway*, *Faroe Islands* and *Iceland*, from where Greenland's civilization originated, and here, archeological investigations concerning the habits and buildings of the olden days were undertaken. So there was in many respects a better foundation to start on when I, in 1903 visited Godthaab's district in Greenland, to undertake similar investigations in the western settlement to those I had undertaken in the eastern settlement.

As indicated, J. A. D. JENSEN's expeditions in 1878, 1884, 1885, in Godthaab's district had occasionally made observations regarding the Norse ruins. He was accompanied in 1878 by cand. polyt., later tutor A. N. KORNERUP and architect E. T. GROTH, and in 1884 by the artist A. C. RIIS CARSTENSEN and in 1885 by first lieutenant C. RYDER and doctor SÖREN HANSEN.

In 1903 I undertook, accompanied by the at that time Inspector of south Greenland, O. BENDIXEN and the Greenlander, and printer JOHN MÖLLER (the son of the well known Lars Möller), investigations in the fiords within Godthaab, chiefly in Pisigsarfik, Ameralik, Ameragdla, and Ilivdek, where some few unknown ruin-groups were found. The excavations were undertaken principally in a churchyard at the head of Ameralik (most likely the ancient Lysufiord). Later on Hans Egede's first dwelling place was found (by Igdluerúnerit) on an island outside Godthaab'sfiord, after which I went south along the coast and visited some ruin-groups in Agdlumêrsat and Fiskenessfiord in the next place to try and find a connection to my investigations from 1894, through a searching of the fiords in the ancient eastern settlement's northern part, which up to now were fairly unexplored.

In the fiords north and south of Arsuk there proved to be in all eighteen ruin-groups. By these investigations the *eastern settlement's north boundary* was carried far northwards to *Tigssaluk* (north of Arsukfiord), whilst the *western settlement's southern boundary* was settled to be *Ameralikfiord* (the ancient Lysufiord), which agrees excellently with the old statement of a six days' row between the eastern and western settlements.

A few, isolated ruins lying in Fiskenessfiord and Agdlumêrsatfiord have evidently not belonged to either of the settlements.

We cannot here go deeper into all these circumstances, but must refer one to the professional treatises. During Holm's investigations in 1880 and mine in 1894 the eastern settlement's most southern part and its centre were chiefly made the object of more rigid examination, therefore in the same manner as the eastern settlement's most northern part was visited in 1903.

Architect MOGENS CLEMMENSEN was in Julianehaab's district in 1910, chiefly so as to visit the church in Kakortok, (Hvalsey church), he visited other Norse ruins, being of the opinion that in Igaliko (Gardar) he had found the place where the assizes were held. He brought, in many ways, several interesting results home.

Later on, ruins have incidentally (in 1912) been found by cand. mag. K. STEPHENSEN and cand. BIRKET SMITH, in the fiords between the centre of the eastern settlement and its most northern part, thus in Ikerssuak and Sermilik.

In conclusion we will state that parson EMIL JESPERSEN had found ruins about four miles to the east of Kagssiarsuk creek, in the vicinity of the inland-ice. Here it is a question of an outfarm.

### Norse farms. — Daily life.

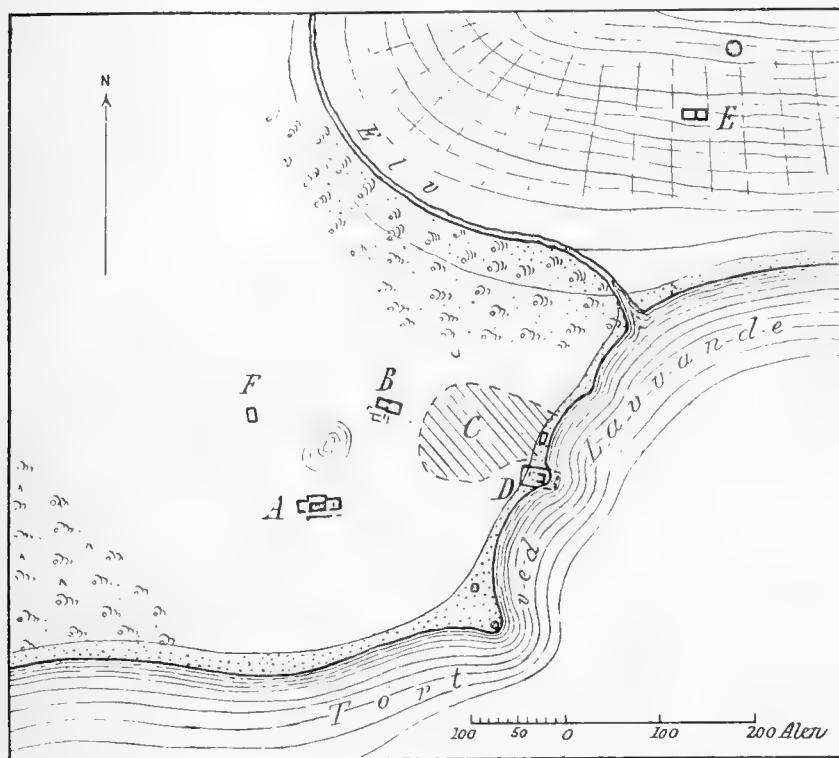
As hinted at, the Greenlanders arranged themselves exactly in the same manner on their farms as the Icelanders were in the habit of doing. The conditions of nature and the terms of life were to a degree essential to both countries.

The position of the Norse farms, in Greenland, has inevitably been dependant on how far a manured homefield (*Tún*) could be arranged on the spot, likewise grass and fodder, in a sufficient quantity for the live stock, must also be provided for, in its vicinity.

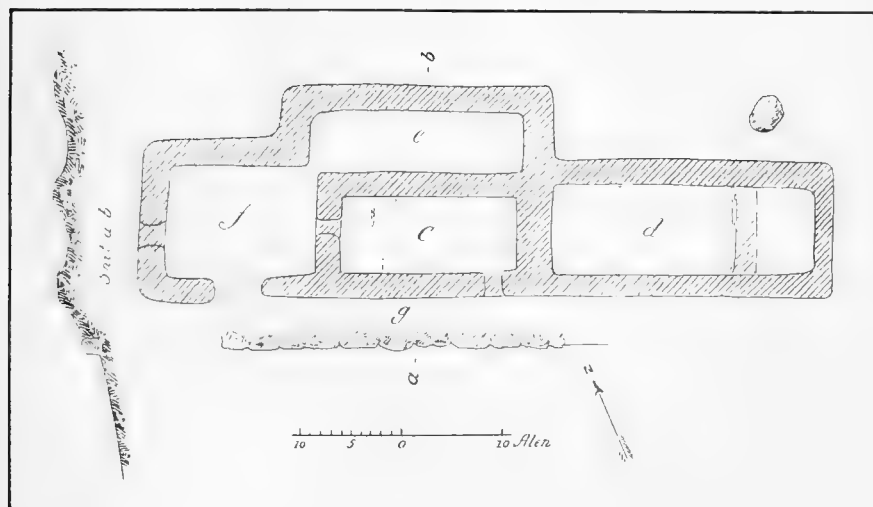
A fairly easy communication with the outer world has also played a very essential part.

Now if such a place was found it was of importance there to erect the necessary buildings, first of all the dwelling houses for people and stables for the domestic animals.

The building material which the Norsemen had at their disposal consisted chiefly of stone and earth turf. The stones were commonly



(D. B. 1903)



(D. B. 1903)

Norse farm and church near Kilársarfik at the head of Ameragdla (Lysufjord).  
(Western settlement) (in Danish ells).

A (see fig. below) and B cowstables with folds and hay-barns. C Dwellings.

D The church and church-yard. E The folds. F Little out-house.

not split before use — it was the natural stoneblocks, large and small, that were used, and which had to be selected for the use they were intended for.

It had been comparatively easy to find the stones, they needed in the vicinity of the ruins where there had been a variety of stones, which through precipitation and disintegration were split into fairly sharp flakes. In the regions where the red sandstone is found, for instance in Tunugdliarfikfiord, it has even been possible to build walls with tolerably horizontal furrows, it was the same case with granit, which splits into sharp pieces, being excellent building material. In the places where such stones were not to be found one had to be content with inferior material, which could not be of the same durability.

In Godthaab's district one cannot find such good building material of stone, therefore the houses in the western settlement are more often built of grass turf and earth, than in Julianehaab's district, and on that account they are more delapidated.

In a country like Greenland where the effects of cold and wind were so perceptible and where chiefly no other building material was to be found, with the exception of a little drifting timber and birch tree, the use of stone walls with earth or grass-turf tightening must have had its advantages, especially in the dwelling houses and the stables for cows, sheep, goats and horses, where it was of importance to procure warm compartments. The necessity of such means of tightening could hardly be expected to appear in the houses which were appointed to be the depository for stores, provisions and hay for the cattle during the winter, besides blubber, fish, hides, skins etc. Amongst the ruins in each group the greatest part is found to have been built in the first manner mentioned, therefore they have become such ruins, whilst a fewer number of out-houses have either had no tightening at all between the stones or in any case so slight an amount that it has been difficult to recognize it. The latter sort of houses are the best preserved, and those which strike the eye first when one approaches the groups of ruins. Besides the houses a number of enclosures are found, mostly erected only of stone, these have long ago been acknowledged as cattle-folds. Finally fences are found, round the homefields, made of earth or of earth and stones.

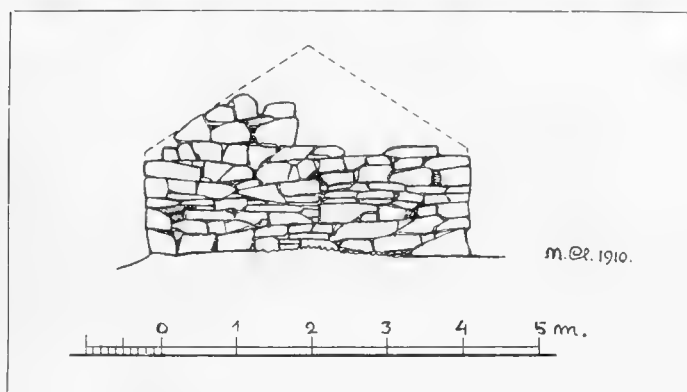
Even if the outside walls of the houses could be erected of stone, grass or earth-turf, one would however be obliged to use a great deal of timber for the inside and the roof. Very few trees grew in the country itself, a great deal of drifting timber was picked up on the coasts in the neighbourhood of the colonies, otherwise it was procured as we have heard, on the long summer expeditions to the north, likewise one could import wood from Norway as long as communication by sea was maintained.

Through the excavations in the sites of the houses in Greenland a great deal of charcoal has been found by which one has been able to decide



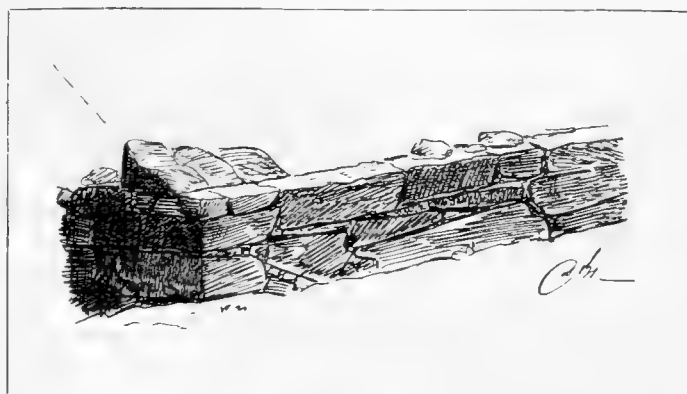
a. General view.

(Th. Groth 1880)



b. The east gable. (Mogens Clemmensen 1910)

a—b. A Ruin near the landing place at Kagssiarssuk (the farm "Undir Höfda").  
(Eastern Settlement).



(D. B. 1894)

The gable of a store house (búr) at Ekaluit in Sermilikfiord.  
(Eastern Settlement).

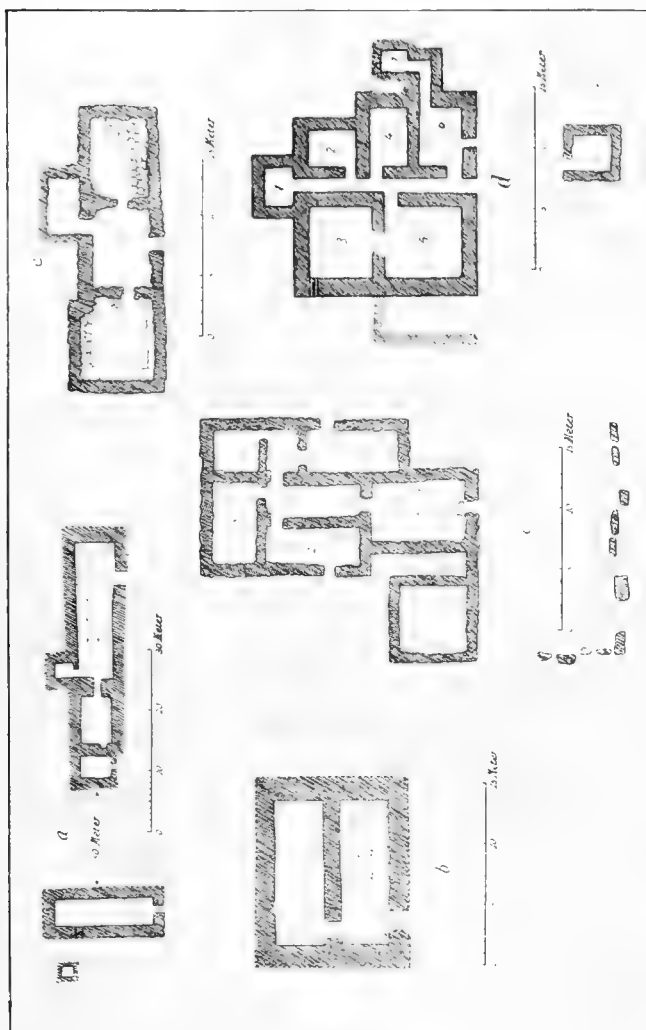
which sort of trees had been used as timber. Specimens of these have been decided by the deceased Professor, Dr. phil. E. ROSTRUP and Professor, Dr. phil. E. WARMING. It is proved that birch has been used, probably from the country itself, and conifer, of which a great deal is sure to have been firs, others perhaps spruce fir, some of which were most likely imported.

The groups of ruins consisted of, from a few, to over twenty houses spread about, as a rule all lying on the home field, which at sometime had been manured. Amongst the ruins a complex of dwellings is discerned, lying near fresh water, (as a rule a rivulet) upon a place which was, as far as possible, dry, and if the farm lay near a fiord then not too far from the landing place.

Around the dwelling-complex the rest of the buildings were thus grouped. Nearest to the dwelling, as a rule, some smaller houses, were found, which had been united to it as *store houses*. In the same place a *stable for the milking cattle* is found, which it was important to have near at hand, a hay-barn was generally united to the stable, as a rule its immediate prolongation. Near at hand or at a distance other *stables* are seen, most likely for *cows, horses, sheep or goats* to which *hay-barns* and *hay-yards* are united (the latter, fenced in square places, where hay is kept in the open air, sometimes covered by grass-turfs).

To these finally *cattle-folds*, large and small, can be added, which can be found both on the home field and in the vicinity up the mountain slopes, or further away on distant pastures. On very remote pastures smaller houses are often seen, which most likely are outfarms.

*The dwellings* wholly resemble the ancient Icelandic ones, having been used, as they still are used in Iceland to this very day. According to the ground-plan they are found in the same variations as over there, right from the oldest fashion, where the closely grouped dwelling houses (*stofa, skáli, eldhús, matbúr* etc.) stood side by side in one line with the gables towards each other — and very often the out houses were behind — down to the later development where they as a rule stand with the gables to the front, grouped in two or three rows behind each other and on both sides of a middle walk. Other variations besides these are to be found, which however resemble mainly the types mentioned. The walls were hardly higher than a man's height, they are made of grass-turf and stones, mostly in horizontal layers, but sometimes, as in Iceland, in zigzag patterns, of which a few ruins bear witness. The floor as a rule was hard beaten clay or gravel. The fire-places in the rooms, were either deeply submersed holes, edged by stones, or they were put on flat stones. Just like the old Icelandic fire-houses (kitchens) one sees that the walls round the fire places are protected by big flat stones. Along the walls in the rooms, platforms are found, which evidently had been benches and sleeping-places. That they had been careful of the houses not being damp is seen by the gutters



(D. B.)

The ground plan of ancient dwelling-houses etc.  
in Iceland and Greenland.

- a The dwelling-house and stable on the farm *Aslákstunga hin innri* in Thiorsaa valley in Iceland.
- b Eric the Red's farm *Eriksstad* in Haukadal in Iceland.
- c Eric the Red's farm *Brattahlíð* in Ericsfiord in Greenland.
- d A farm at *Tingimiut* in Tasiussak (A bay out of Sermilikfiord) in Greenland.
- e A farm at *Nunasarnak* in Ericsfiord in Greenland.

that are found in some places. The roofs were no doubt made of layers of grass-turf over rafters. In the roofs the light and smoke openings have been situated in the same fashion as in the Icelandic and Farøe "Rögstue". Such an opening in the roof was mentioned in the "Fosterbrother saga".

Immediately in the vicinity of the dwellings, sometimes even close to them, some small square buildings are seen, which partly were depositories or provision rooms (*útibúr*) or forges (*smiðja*); big *kitchen dung hills* with ashes, refuse and animals' bones are to be found in the same places.

Here in the dwellings a number of remains of provision-vessels, both large and small, are to be found, made of soap stone found in the country, many of these things have later on been perforated and have evidently been used as a weight on a loom, such as are found in Norway and in Iceland, possibly also as sinkers for fishing nets.

Besides such antiquities many other objects are found in and near the houses, such as iron knives, iron nails, some bone quoits, spinning stones, millstones, implements of bone etc., which give evidence of the daily life being plain and monotonous. Several of the weights have home-marks, and in some cases runes, besides simple strokes and circle ornaments; only a few are better ornamented with Roman ornaments, but the whole bears witness to art being at a very low standard.

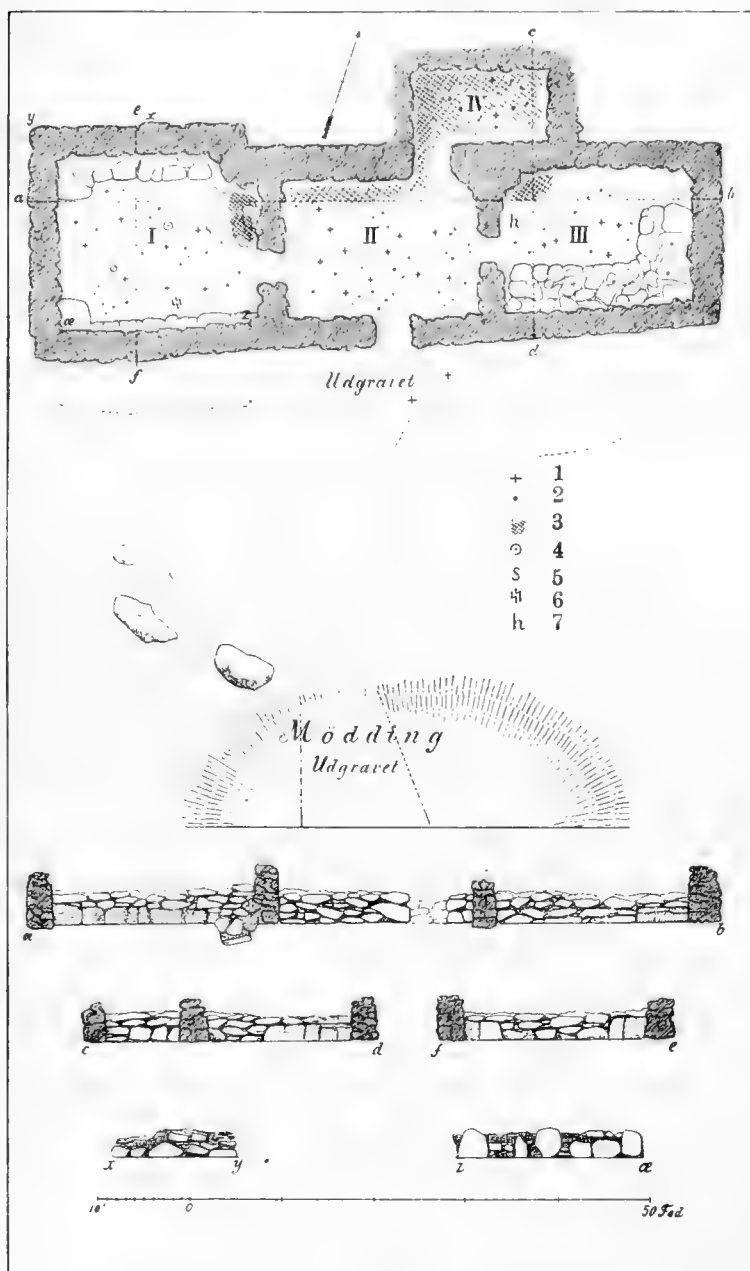
We will refer to the out-houses further on.

Therefore piles of refuse from the Norsemen's meals lay close outside the dwelling houses. As a rule they form layers, often several feet deep, of ashes and bones, sprinkled with fragments of "soap stone" vessels, and utensils which were thrown away. The surface of the dung-hill is as a rule, undulated, and the whole implies that they have existed through long periods of regular piling up of kitchen refuse. They are easily discerned in the grounds by the grass's appearance being more succulent and stronger than in other places, and are the best guide to the position of the dwelling-houses.

It was also through them that I succeeded in substantiating the ancient Norse dwellings. During my stay in Greenland in 1894 and 1903 respectively in the eastern and western settlement's old districts, I undertook excavations in different kitchen dung hills by which I succeeded in collecting many *animal bones*, which later on have been delivered to the zoological museum in Copenhagen, and were examined there by vice-inspector HERLUF WINGE. These investigations prove that the chief contents of these refuse piles are bones of seals (the bones of the "harpseals" are predominant), then come bones of oxen, and goats; in other words the ancient Norsemen have maintained themselves just as much through the capture of seals as through the breeding of cattle.

Of *domestic animals*, besides oxen and goats, also sheep, horses and dogs have been found. Besides which, bones of ordinary Greenland mammals were found; polar fox, polar bear, walrus; beard seals, fiord





(D. B. 1894)

Ruin of a dwelling-house on the farm at Tunuarmit near Nunarsarnak.  
(Tunugdliarfik = Eric'sfiord). (in Danish feet).

Explanation: Udgravet = Excavated. Mødding, udgravet = refuse-heap, excavated. 1, 2: Fragments of soap-stone. 3: Charcoal and ashes. 4: Spinning stones. 5: Whet-stones. 6: Woven wollen stuff. 7: Whale bones.

seal, ringseal and especially no few harp seals, crest seals and reindeer, but no hares. The small amount of birds and fish was astonishing, from which however must not be interpreted that the Norsemen were not engaged in fishing and bird catching. We know, on the contrary, through the saga that they went out fishing. The explanation probably is that the fish and bird refuse was either thrown into the sea, or eaten by the dogs or burnt.

One dare assume that the Norsemen in Greenland have used manure and refuse as fuel in the same manner, as it has been and still is done in Iceland. — In the bones, found on the dung-hills, marks of dogs and foxes' teeth are often seen.

It seems, according to the ruins and bones found, that the Greenland farms had great numbers of live stock. *The enclosures and stalls for cows, sheep or goats* have often been very large, and there have certainly been hundreds of such animals on many of the farms.

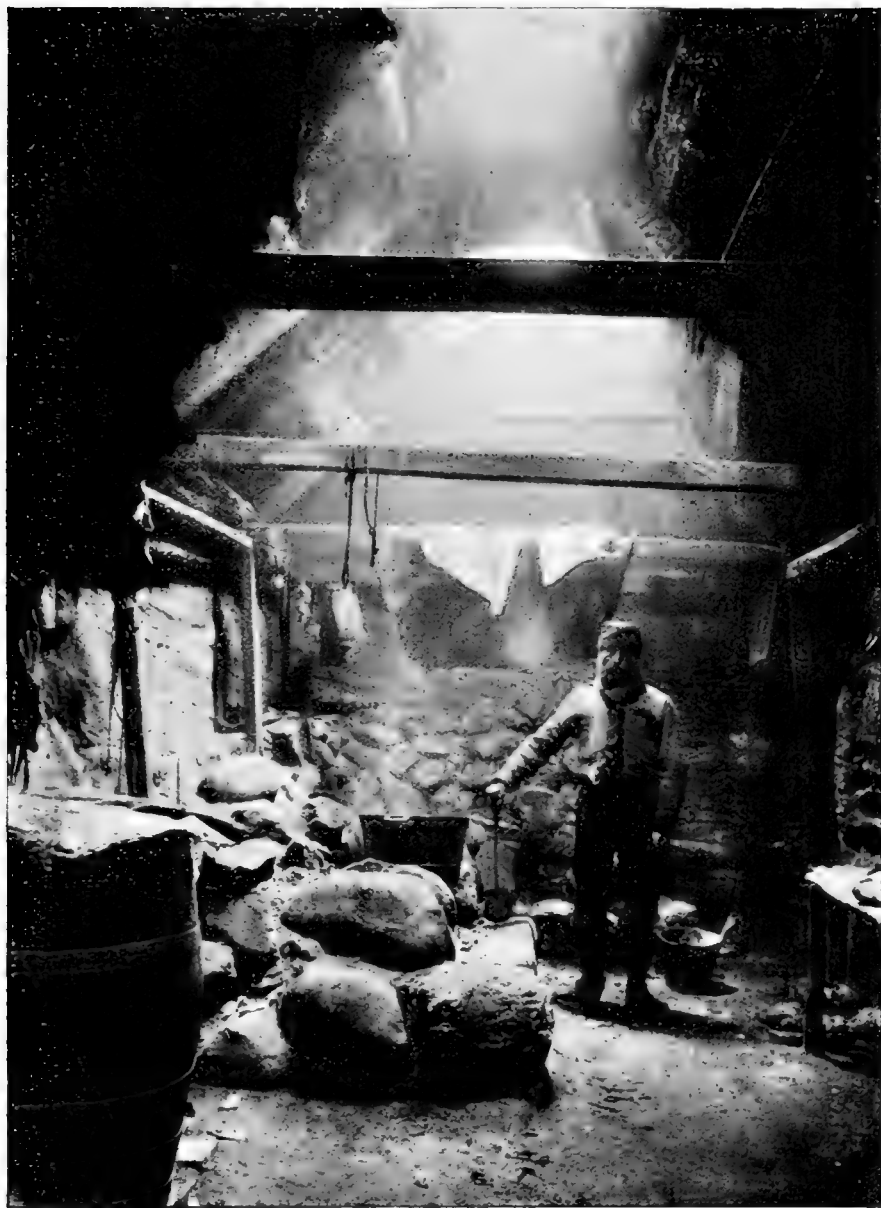
Not only cows but also sheep and goats were milked, the small divided pens prove it, in which the mothers and lambs were separated during the night, so that the mothers could be milked in the morning. Some bigger folds have probably been used as milking folds for cows. In many places on the farms, just like on the Faroe Islands, one finds large and small folds at the edge of the home fields or outside them, where sheep and goats were driven together or where the flocks took shelter during a storm. This proves that they have been free a long time during the winter. In other places big folds are found especially near the water. Here the washing of wool most likely took place and the sheep to be killed were selected.

In *the winter*, the *stables* were used for sheep and goats.

They must be searched amongst the longer or shorter ruins often amongst the houses, divided by partitions, which chiefly are built of grass-turf and stones. They are always narrower than the cow and horse stables and seldom more than 8 or 10 feet in diameter.

*Hay barns* or open *hay yards* are most frequently found near them or even built onto them, and sometimes they form an angle to the stables. The hay yards had no roof. At greater or lesser distances from the farm, in places where the pasture is good, one sometimes sees smaller houses with enclosures near by, these are probably sheep folds with hay yards; such sheep folds are known in Iceland right down to our days. From here the animals could every now and then during the winter find food for themselves in the open air.

The breadth of the *cow stables* were on an average from 13 to 13½ (Dan.) feet, which in the olden days was normal over the whole of the north. The cows stood in two rows along the outer walls, but the space was so narrow that one evidently had to wind in and out so as to go lengthwise through the stables. Big flat stones formed the partition between the cattle-pens. In these low and narrow stables the cows, like in Iceland,



Old-fashioned Kitchen (eldhús).  
Iceland.

(Johs. Klein 1898)

had to spend the winter, having in bad years insufficient food, perhaps fed in an emergency on twigs and fish, and so forth. In the summer the milking-cows probably grazed in the vicinity of the farms so that they could be driven home to be milked.

The stables were chiefly built of earth-turf and stones. The hay barns which were joined to them, were on the contrary mostly built of stones so that the wind could have free scope.

As the lowlands near the farms are not specially well off with regards to grass vegetation, the Norsemen have been obliged to gather hay in the highlands or where they otherwise could get it. The hay is then brought home in boats, in the winter on sledges, sometimes on horseback, like in Iceland, and distributed in the different animal's stables. The milking cows got the best, the wethers and the young cattle the worst. As the forrage was distributed so the domestic animals were divided into the different stables.

The *horses stables* are certain to have been arranged like the cow's stables, yet the boxes were as a rule, only along the one side-wall of the house. They are, most frequently not found in the immediate vicinity of the dwellings, but a little further away. It was not of so great importance, as with the cows, to have them always at hand.

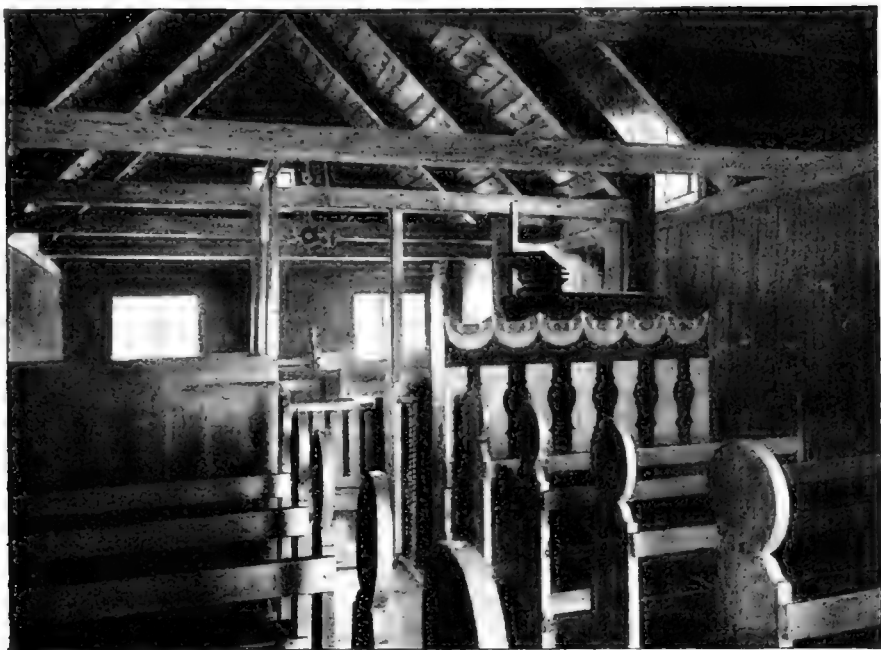
It is not easy to substantiate how far they, in Greenland, lived during the summer like in Iceland, on the *outfarms* with the milking cows and milking sheep etc., as it is difficult to ascertain whether the smaller groups of ruins with a few houses, should be explained as out-farms or as small independant farms. In a few places it seems to be fairly certain that outfarms had been used.

It is probable that the *lambs* and *young cattle*, like in Iceland were driven *during the summer into the highlands*, so as to get their forage there in the open air. In some places large pens are seen, to which smaller compartments are joined, which could have been used as separation pens. Here the separating and distributing of sheep (and goats) to the different farms might have taken place, as the owners identified the animals by marks in the ears. In many cases one only need let the animals of a few farms go together into the highlands, but in some cases one could not, on account of the circumstances of nature, hinder the sheep of several farms getting mixed.

*Cattle breeding* required a lot of looking after. The hay on the home-fields had to be mown, but all the hay for winter forage had, as mentioned, to be gathered far away.

*Cereal culture*, as mentioned, was tried, likewise they had tried to cultivate *garden plants* in different places.

Such enclosures, were, for instance, seen on the farm "*Undir Höfða*", which resembled the Icelandic Kvann-gardens. There was hardly any question of there being a luxuriant growth of bushes and plants in such "gardens".



Interior of an old-fashioned turf-church.  
Iceland.

(Johs. Klein 1898)



In front of a little pack-house ("skemma").  
Iceland.

(Johs. Klein 1898)

There was, besides, a great deal to be done during the summer.

*Fishing* in the fiords and on the coasts or in the rivers, which abounded with salmon, *seal catching*, which probably necessitated their living in tents on the islands at times, *whale catching* from big boats, and *hunting expeditions* often in remote regions in the interior of the country where the reindeer lived, and where they spent the night in huts of which there are still some remains.

We have heard that the Norsemen undertook long *summer excursions* northwards, but towards their termination, when intercourse with the north, as it were had stopped, they hardly had ships in condition, so this livelihood had to be diminished. It was difficult to build bigger ships of drifting timber. One had to, when there was a want of iron for nails etc. be content with wood.

Already in the year 1189 there came a ship (or a bigger boat) to Iceland from Greenland, in which there was not a single nail or piece of iron to be found. The rigging was fastened by leather straps.

During *the winter* they looked after the cattle, went out capturing seals and fishing in the fiords. There is no doubt of their having caught foxes in *traps*, as everywhere they are to be found in the vicinity of the Norse ruins. They are composed of a long narrow space in a heap of stones. The entrance could be shut by a trap-door, i. e. a flat stone which hung on a string, and which fell down when the bait was touched. A few large traps have presumeably been bear, perhaps wolf traps.

We have heard, through the extract, already mentioned, out of "The King's Mirror" about the Norsemen's lives and what they exported, by the selling of which they could procure the necessary articles, such as iron and corn which were wanting. Walrus teeth were, among other things of great value.

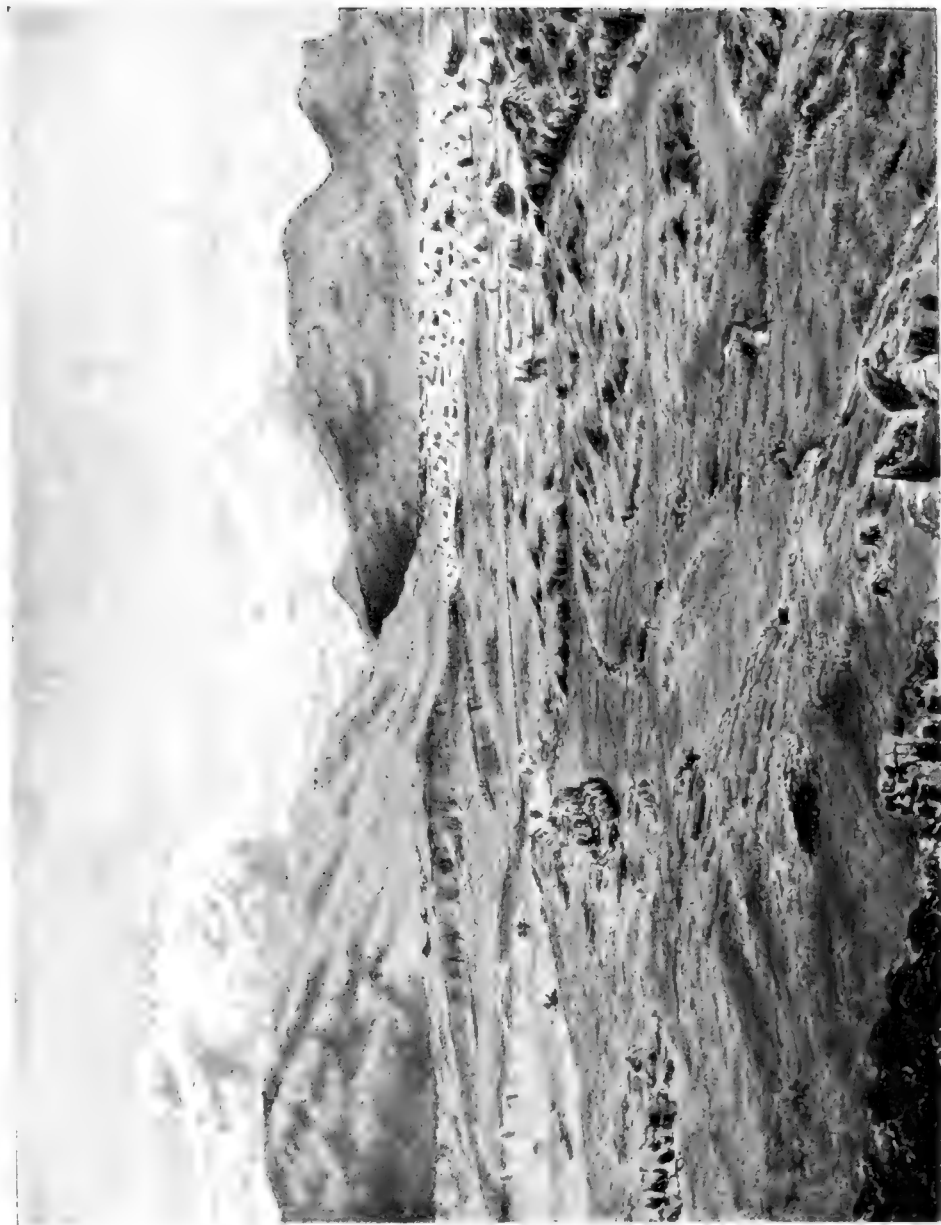
It is seen that the crusader tithes were paid with them.

Alive white bears and hawks were also of great value at the courts in the middle ages in Europe, where the latter were used in hunting.

Ropes made of walrus hides for ships, seal skins and skins of different animals, as well as frieze were exported. Frieze belongs, on the whole, to the Greenland merchandise already mentioned in several places.

They spun and wove at home, of which, as mentioned, several objects found, such as spinning stones, weights for the loom etc. bear witness. Garments were made of the wool. Samples of such have been found in the graves. Thus there was enough to be done, especially on the big farms, where besides the household there were men and girls, as a rule of the slave race.

Life glided monotonously on from generation to generation. The horizon became narrower and narrower. Superstition flourished, which the saga have already recounted, but through the complaints, already known, it is seen, that often the inhabitant's mental state was very defective.

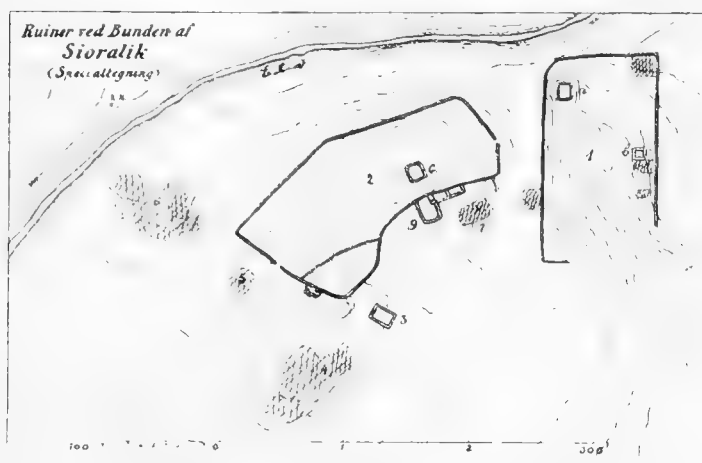


The view from the big farm Tingimint across Tasiusak bay.

(N. P. Jørgensen pinx.)







(Froda 1894)

Large folds at the head of Sioralik (Ruin-group No. 90).  
(Eastern Settlement). (in Dan. feet).

The large folds are in several places of a man's height, built of stones.



(D. B. 1894)

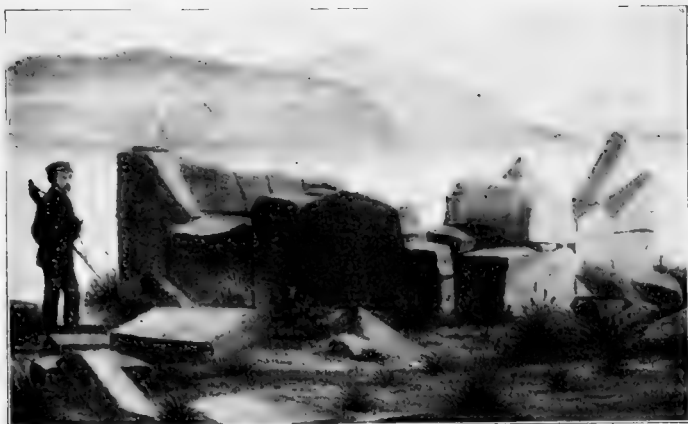
A big round fold at Ininguit (Arsukfiord).  
(Eastern Settlement, northern part).

They themselves had this feeling, therefore the pope was repeatedly requested, to send priests to the country, already in 1100. Shallowness in every phase of life was the feature that characterized the Norse age's last period — that period of which we know so very little. There were only few pleasures. One had horses and could therefore ride out visiting if one did not prefer going by boat, or by sledges during the winter. Sometimes they amused themselves with hopping on one leg along a row of stones set up. Such rows are still found in several places in Godthaabsfiord. Bow and arrow shooting and bodily exercise were also amusements they indulged in.

There were generally no drinking bouts, beer could not be brewed, malt was wanting.

In spite of the Norse colony's remoteness, we can almost say shut in, from the rest of the world which contained the culture of that age, the Greenlanders kept, in any case during their first period — perhaps during the first centuries — a mental vivacity, which produced literary results — inevitably far from the same degree as in Iceland, where their kinsmen, at this period were flourishing in poetry and saga tales (at that time however verbal). Such were not wanting in Greenland, in any case, a few perhaps even several, of Edda's poems were composed in Greenland, as FINNUR JÓNSSON has tried to make clear.





(Th. Groth 1830).

A ruin at Umiausat in Tunugdliarfíki (Eric's fiord).  
Far in the background is Igdlersfjall (Bürfell).

## Chapter XI.

### Ancient Greenland Topography.

**A**fter having given the facts of the country's history and the conditions of culture, we will end by giving a concise summary of its topography, as it appears in the saga, IVAR BAARDSÖN'S accounts and the inventories of the churches and fiords etc., which BJÖRN JÓNSSON (died 1655) and ARNGRÍMUR JÓNSSON (died 1648) had copied from an ancient manuscript.

#### The uninhabited regions on the east coast and on Greenland's southern point.

On plate VI, we have given a general view of the courses indicated in the ancient publications. By comparing them with what is recorded of Eric the Red's voyage of discovery in Chapter I, one will see, that in any case, — when coming either from Norway or Iceland — one passed the southern point of Greenland, as Ivar Baardsön says, so as to:

“come in under the high land in Greenland, which is called “*Huarff*” [*Hvarf*]. The day before one can see the above mentioned Hvarf, one will see another high mountain, which is called “*Huidserch*” [*Hvidserk*], and under [between?] the two mountains mentioned, Hvarf and Hvidserk, lies a point, which is called “*Herrioldtznæs*” [*Heriolfsness*] and there lies a harbour, which is called *Sand*, which was the universal harbour for Norsemen and merchants”.

We have seen that Hvarf is presumably *Nunarssuit* (Cape Desolation), and Hvidserk is supposed to be a mountainous part covered with ice, on the south point or south east point of Greenland. More to the north on the east coast lay the *Midjökull* (middle glacier), part of which was called *Blaaserk*. Here Eric the Red approached land on his voyage of discovery. Still further north lay *Gunbiörn's skerries*, which perhaps are the islands beyond the coast in the vicinity of the present Greenland colony *Angmagssalik* (Ammassalik) on 65° 30' n. lat.

The old route to the eastern settlement from Snefiældsness was straight to the west to Gunbiörn's skerries, and from there further along the coast past the middle glacier and Blaaserk, to Hvidserk and from there round the south point of the country to Hvarf; but as Ivar says:

"now the ice has come out of the sea bays so near to the skerries mentioned, [Gunbiörns skerries], that no one, without danger to life can sail in the old direction."

One therefore went further to the southwest round the ice.

On Greenland's east coast lay a place still further north than Gunbiörn's skerries, called *Scalbard* (i. e. the cold, or the wind exposed coast), "northwards in the sea-bay" (i. e. a bay, which cuts into the mainland from the sea). It took "four days and nights at sea" to get there from the peninsula Langeness on Iceland's north coast. Probably *Scoresbysound* is Svalbard. In the Norse age Greenland's inhospitable east coast was not inhabited by people of Norwegian origin, but perhaps by Eskimoes (gnomes are mentioned). This of course does not debar the possibility of outlaws having been able to avoid persecution there for a short time. We have heard in the less reliable saga of Thorgils Orrabeinsfostri about the outlaw *Rolf*. There could also be a question of the Norsemen staying here during the summer for a shorter time on account of the good hunting. A *Seleyri* (seal point) is mentioned in the above said saga, where one could capture seals (refer to page 76). Thorgils visited this place before he reached the outlaw Rolf's habitation, after which he went south round the land to the eastern settlement.

On 60½° n. lat. the fiord *Kangerdlugsuatsiak* cuts deeply into the east coast with arms to the north and south.

On the fiord's northern side near *Narssak*, a Norse ruin was found in the year 1881 by the Moravian missionary BRODBECK from Fredericsdal — the only one substantiated on the east coast.

It bears, in any case, witness to the Norsemen having been there for a comparatively long time.

Ivar Baardsøn wrote as follows, about Greenland's most southern point near the present *Cape Farewell* (59° 48' n. lat.):

"Greenland's most easterly town [settlement] lies right to the east of Heriølfssness and is called "*Shagafioer*" [*Skagafiördr*]. It is a big town. Far east of Skagafiord lies a fiord, which is not inhabited and

which is called "*Berrefjord*" [*Berufjördr* i. e. female bear fiord], and across the entrance to the fiord lies a reef, so that no big ship can enter without there being a rapid current; and when the current is rapid, whales without number swim there. Fish is never wanting in Berufjord; in this fiord whales, are generally caught, but only with the bishop's permission, as the fiord belongs to the cathedral, and in this fiord is a big hole [deep] a whalefish hole and when the tide goes out then all the whales swim into the hole mentioned.

Further east of Berufjord lies a fiord, called "*Allumlengre*" [i. e. *Öllumlengri* = longer than all the others].

It is narrow outside and very much broader inside. Its length is so great, that no one knows the end of it. There is no stream in it and it is full of holms; there are also birds and eggs. The land is flat on both sides, overgrown with green grass as far as any man has travelled [i. e. has reached].

Further eastwards towards the ice-mountains lies a harbour, which is called "*Finsbuder*" [*Finnsbudir*], so called because a ship foundered in the time of Holy Olaf; according to a general rumour, which is current to this very day Saint Olaf's page was on board the ship and he was drowned with the others, and those who survived buried the dead and raised a big stone cross over the grave, which is still standing to this very day. Eastwards, nearer the ice-mountains, lies a big island which is called "*Kaarssöoe*" (i. e. cross-island) there, there is universal hunting of white bears, by the permission of the bishop, as the island belongs to the cathedral. Still further east, as far as one can see, there is nothing but ice and snow both in land and on water."

The position of the places mentioned by Ivar cannot for the present be given accurately, but there is however a likelihood with regard to a few.

Cape Farewell lies on *Egger's island*. To the north of it, 60° n. lat., another large and deeply branching island is to be found, *Christian the Fourth's island*, surrounded by smaller islands. This might be "*Kaarssöe*". In another place is mentioned:

"*Cross-islands*" as they are called, because the four biggest of them lie in the form of a cross, and are surrounded by the smaller ones".

Narrow sounds are between the islands in which birds are also caught. This fits in well with the group of islands north of Cape Farewell.

G. F. HOLM who traversed the coast in 1880 and later on an "Umiak" expedition in 1883—85, says, that the most southern part of Greenland's west coast consists of wild jagged mountainous parts, which are from 6000 to 7000 feet high, intersected by many deep fiords partly running parallel; in many places tracts of valleys are to be found between them which lead from the one fiord to the other. The face of the mountains are often inaccessible, and the summits form lacerated crests.

Ice has never covered these mountains, but previously, as it still

does, collects in the tracts of valleys and clefts between the mountain tops. The height decreases eastwards, likewise the wild appearance of the mountains deteriorates in that direction. In the vicinity of the east coast the mountains are seldom over 3000 feet high. The large southern islands completely resemble the mainland.

The centre of Greenland's southern point is towards the west a magnificent mountainous landscape with immense, coagulating glaciers, whilst the lower eastern part is covered with a layer of snow-covered ice, which lies in hills and dales according to the country it covers, and above which all the hill-tops rise. This at least holds good for the tract south of a line between the centre of *Tasermiut* and *Kangerdlugsua-siakfiord*. — Although glaciers are found all over the mountains on the mainland they are seldom on the islands, and the biggest glaciers Holm saw were on Chr. IV's island.

It is evident that "*Kaarsöøe*" and *Hvidserk* have lain in these parts. *Finnsbudir* lay west of Hvidserk possibly on the east coast (refer page 114). *Öllumlengri* is perhaps the long narrow sound *Ikerasarssuk* (in Greenland this name means the large narrow sound), if it is not *Kangerdlugsua-siak* which is further north.

The following will be stated out of an ancient manuscript, which concerns the east coast and the country's south point:

"There is a stream called *Hafhverf* on the east side of the country, thereafter *Spalsund*, thereafter *Drangey*, then *Sölvadalr* which is the most eastern settlement."

The above named localities: *Berufiord* "far to the east of Skagefiord", *Spalsund* (= the narrow sound), and *Drangey* (= the island with the pointed rock) must be sought on the south point of the country in the vicinity of the inhabited regions; but however beyond them.

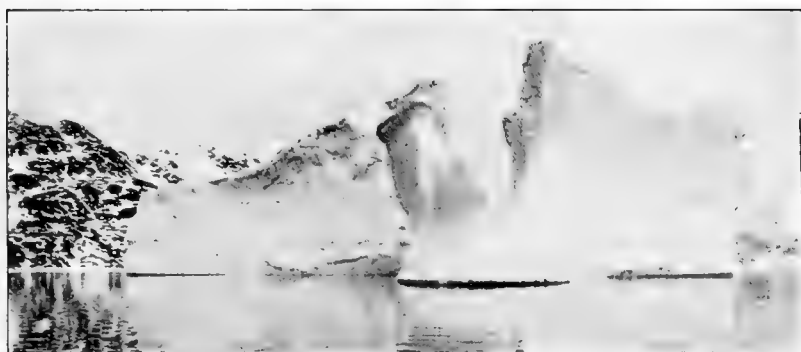
### **The southern part of the Eysribygd (eastern settlement).**

The greatest part of the territory which comprises the ancient eastern settlement consists of an extent of coast with high mountains, behind which the inland ice stretches.

The coast is intersected by deep fiords, the banks of which in some places were not very broad, but on the contrary rising fairly steeply. The Norse farms often lie on this underground; but in the fiords, headlands and isthmuses are also found, and between them comparatively low territories, where one finds several farms up country.

The eastern settlement's territory stretched from the region N. W. of Cape Farewell through the present Julianehaab's district to the north of Arsukfiord.

We will start at the settlement's southern boundary and go northwards. Fortunately we have at once a point which is accurately fixed,



From south west Greenland.

1. The head of Ûnartokfiord (Froda 1894). 2. The entrance to Ericsfiord (Froda 1894).
3. Icebergs (Froda 1894). 4. Goats at Godthaab (D. B. 1903).
5. Norse ruin at the head of Ameragdla (D. B. 1903).

namely *Heriølfssness*, which lay west of *Narssak* near *Ikigait* (Østproven) of which we shall speak presently.

Biörn mentions *Melrakkaness* (i. e. fox point) as the first mainland peninsula which stretches as far as the sea, west of Cape Farewell. *Sandhöfn* (now *Narssak*) lay to the west of it. East of Melrakkanes a narrow fiord (now *Torssukátak*) cuts inland; it joins an interior fiord (*Ilua*) with two arms (*Kangikitsok* and the creek into *Igdlorssuit*, the latter most easterly). On both these arms ruins are found.

This interior fiord must be *Skagaffjördr*. Biörn as well as Ivar declare *Sölvadalr* to be "the most eastern settlement", and in "Landnama" it is said, that "*Sölvi* took *Sölvadalr*". Therefore, it seems to me reasonable to assume that Skagafiord and Sölvadalr are the two fiord arms mentioned. Finnur Jónsson's opinion is, that *Tófafiord*, mentioned by Biörn, is the same as *Torssukátak*. An ancient church inventory says that there was a church at *Heriølfssfiord* — Biörn calls it *Heriølfssness church*. Heriølfssfiord is evidently that fiord (now Amitsuarssuk) which cuts into the country west of Melrakkanes.

There is absolutely no doubt of Heriølfssness being the present *Ikigait* (Østproven), as one has found ruins there of an ancient church and churchyard. They lie on a low tongue of land, which is overgrown with grass and heather. Close behind rises a very steep mountain and beyond the coast lie several low islands. Holm mentions, besides the church, two very dilapidated and indistinct Norse ruins, and added to which a number of remains of ancient Greenlandic houses.

Through the washing away of the ground along the coast a great many things have been found at different times, which originate from the Norse churchyard, where at one time excavations were undertaken, when wooden coffins were found with the remains of skeletons, either clothed in woollen garments or without grave-clothes, besides which small wooden crosses which evidently had been laid in the graves. A tombstone with an inscription in majuscules (refer to page 109) dates likewise from this churchyard, which the sea continues to diminish, by washing more and more away.

The Landnam-man *Heriølf* lived at Heriølfssness. We find written in "Landnama":

"A man named *Heriølf*, son of Bard, son of Heriølf, a kinsman of the Landnam-man *Ingolf* [in Iceland], who gave [the last mentioned] Heriølf the tract of land lying between Vaag and Reykianess. The younger Heriølf went to Greenland when Eric the Red began to colonize it. On his ship was a christian man from Syderö [Hebrides], who wrote the poem *Haferdingadrapa*. — — Heriølf took Heriølfssfiord into possession and became a very excellent man".

*Bjarni Heriølfsson* is mentioned as his son, whose expedition to north America's east coast is spoken of in *Flateybook*, and whose existence as a historical person is doubted (refer to page 52). The farm



is also spoken of in other places, amongst others in Bard Helgi's poem.

Between *Amitsuarssuk* and the fiord *Tasermiut* lying more to the west, is a broad peninsula, the south end of which is intersected by bays, and beyond which lay some islands. F. Jónsson's opinion is that here lies *Helliseyjarfjördr* and *Hellisey* (i. e. hollow island) mentioned by Biörn.

The long *Tasermiutfiord* is doubtless the ancient *Ketilsfjördr*.

Holm says it is one of Greenland's most beautiful fiords, surrounded by peculiarly high mountains, with tracts of valleys between, with rapid rivers running through, and they distinguish themselves by their luxuriant thicket vegetation. In the centre of the fiord two glaciers come down over very steep ground.

"*Ketil* took *Ketilsfiord*", it is said.

Ivar says:

"*Kieldeltzfiord* [*Ketilsfjördr*] lies to the west of Heriølsness, and there it is fully inhabited; a large outlet lies on the right hand as one sails into the fiord, into which big rivers run. Near this outlet is a church which is called "*Aurooss*" church [*Áróss* i. e. mouth of the brook], which is consecrated to the holy cross. It owns everything outwards as far as Heriølsness, islands, holms, wreckage and everything in as far as "*Peitersuig*" [*Petursvik*]. Near *Petursvik* lies a large settlement which is called "*Verdsdall*" [*Vatnsdalr*]. Near this settlement there is a big piece of "vand" [i. e. lake]. "Thou Vegger [icel. Vika, i. e. naval mile] söes brett", filled with fish. *Petursvik* church owns the whole of *Vatnsdal* settlement. Furthermore a big convent lies near this settlement in which "*Canonici regulares*" is, [and] which is consecrated to St. Olaf and St. Augustinus. The convent owns everything up to the head of the fiord and everything beyond on the other side".

In the middle of the fiord towards the east there is a creek, above which lies a lake, *Taserssuak* with a beautiful valley, *Kingua*. Here we find both *Petursvik*, lake and *Vatnsdalr*, whilst the convent for monks must be searched further up the fiord, most likely near *Tasermiutsiak*. F. J. says that *Áros* with the church has possibly lain in the creek *Tasiussak* on the most extreme east side of the fiord. Both the church inventory and Biörn mention two churches in *Ketilsfiord*. Now we come to a fiord not mentioned by Ivar, but which is known through the *Landnama* and Biörn, namely *Alptafjördr* (now southern *Sermilik*), which was taken into possession by *Snorri Thorbrandsson*, an outlaw Iclander, who evidently named it after a fiord in *Snæfellsness* in Iceland where his home was. He came to Greenland later than the other *Landnam*-men and had to be content with a less tempting place.

In the fiord, glaciers are found, as its name (*Sermilik* = icefiord) indicates. Beyond this fiord several islands lay; amongst these *Lundey* (i. e. sea parrot island) must be searched, and *Hrakbjarnarey*, which Biörn

speaks of. The biggest island is *Sermersók*, which southern point one has wished to identify as Hvarf, which I consider wrong.

IVAR says further more:

"Next to Ketilsfiord lies *Rampnessfiord* [evidently a misprint for *Hrafnshjördr*], and a long way up this fiord lies a nuns'-convent *Ordinis Sancti Benedicti*; the convent owns everything up to the head of the fiord and from "Voge" [*Vaagar*] church outwards, which is consecrated to King St. Oluf. Vaagar church owns everything beyond the fiord. There are many holms inside the fiord, and the convent divides everything with the cathedral. There is much warm water on these holms which in the winter is so hot that no one can approach it; but in the summer it is moderately warm, so that one can bathe in it, and many search remedies there, to be healthy and cured of illnesses".

*Rafnsfiord* (*Hrafnshjördr*) is evidently the same as *Únartokfiord* of our days. It was one of the first fiords that one could identify with security. The fact is that there is no doubt of Ivar's account referring to some warm springs, which are to be found on the island *Únartok* (i. e. the boiling) in the mouth of the fiord. The nuns convent of the Benedict-order lay presumably near the present *Sarkarmut* at the inner end of the fiord. Holm here mentions some very collapsed ruins on a swampy plain, which is overgrown with grass and heather. The outward part of *Únartokfiord* has fairly flat coasts. All the islands in- and outside this fiord are low and rounded.

*Eric the Red* reached as far south as *Rafnsfiord* on his voyage of discovery (refer to page 26). Later on *Rafn* annexed land in *Rafnsfiord*.

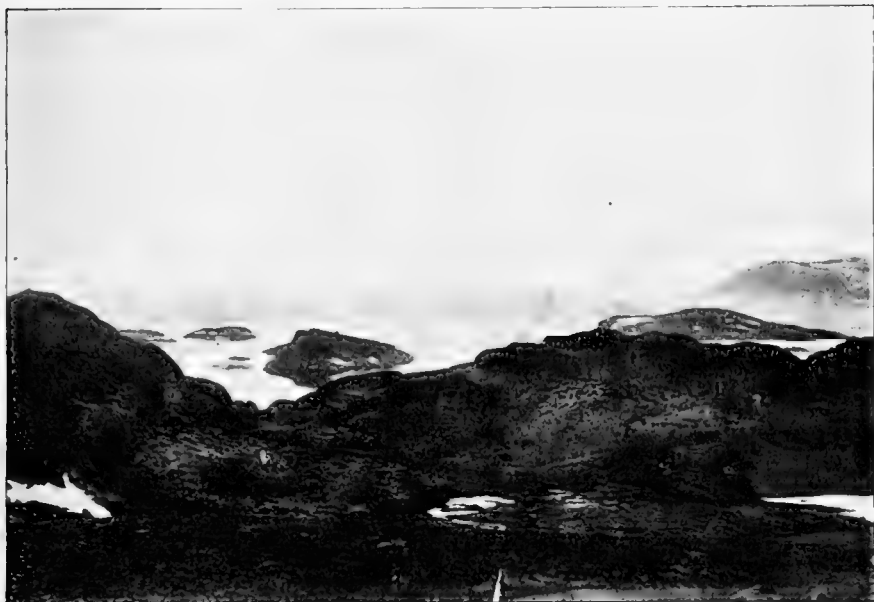
Here Ivar again skips a fiord which is mentioned both in *Ländnama* and in the church inventory, the fourth church of which is said to lie "on *Vaagar* in *Siglufjördr*"; *Biörn* also mentions "*Siglufjördr* (with a church)".

This fiord must be identical with *Agdluitsokfiord* lying inside *Sydproven*, having the two branches *Amitsuarssuk* (in N. W.) and *Sioralik* (in N. E.). Between these two fiord branches lies a mighty mountain range, *Akuliaruserssuak* with summits of over 5000 feet (1600 metres). A hollow leads from the head of the one fiord branch to the other.

IVAR relates further

"After this comes "*Eynerfiord*" [*Einarsfjördr*] and between it and the above mentioned "*Rampnessfiord*" [*Rafnsfjördr*] lies a large royal farm, which belongs to the king, and that farm is called *Foss*; and there stands a costly church consecrated to St. Nicolaus, which the king could enfeoff, and near by lies a big lake full of fish, when it is high water and rain falls; and when the water runs out and is decreased, then fish without number remain behind lying on the sand".

The original account is evidently somewhat misrepresented in the later translations and reproductions. The "costly church" consecrated



The promontory Kangek seen from the Kitsigsut islands.  
(Eastern settlement).  
(A. Jessen 1894)



The warm springs at Unartok.  
(Eastern settlement).  
(A. Jessen 1894)

to St. Nicolaus can, in fact, be no other than the cathedral in *Gardar* (more of which further on), which was consecrated to the holy Nicolaus; otherwise no church near Foss is mentioned in the church inventory. It is not known where *Vaagar* church has stood, but it must be searched on one of the two fiord branches, on the other hand there is no doubt as to where the farm *Foss* and the lake mentioned lay.

At the head of Amitsuarssuk lay two lakes, a large and a small one in magnificent surroundings; between them is a high waterfall, in the vicinity of which the farm Foss must surely be searched. Ivar says that it lies between Rafnsfiord and Einarsfiord (the next fiord to be mentioned). Finnur Jónsson says that this is approximately right, and so far natural, as he does not mention Siglufiord. The lake spoken of is evidently the one Ivar refers to. FRODE PETERSEN (FRODA) says it cannot be adapted to the big lake, which lies uppermost, on the other hand the conditions are better suited to the little lake, on the flat shores of which the fish were far more likely to remain lying when the water fell quickly after an overflow. Salmon is also found in this lake. The ruins of a farm are found at the head of this fiord. Siglufiord was colonized by *Thorbiörn Glora*.

The mountainous land which stretches from the region of Cape Farewell to *Agdluitsokfiord* is now succeeded, in the region south of Julianehaab, by surroundings more undulating and more level. A tongue of land spreads itself here towards the south. It is intersected by fiords and bays. In some of these, ruins are found. F. J. says we must search, *Slettufiord*, *Hornefiord* and *Ofundinnfiord* (i. e. "the not found fiord") here, which are mentioned by Biörn. The last one has probably derived its name through its not having been found at once; it is most likely as CLEMENSEN says, identical with *Sermisek*, the mouth of which is not easy to find.

Nearest the inland ice, uninhabited and partly barren and desolate ridges of hills rise, which decrease towards the south to the height of a line between the interior of Igaliko and Amitsuarssukfiord.

The country S. W. of this line is filled with lower undulating tablelands and less mountainous parts, the highest height of which is about 1500 feet (500 m.). A number of large and small lakes, which have their outlet in the fiords, lay in the valleys and lowlands. On the shores of the lakes as along the rivers in the valleys comparatively luxuriant pastures are found, not to mention the red wortleberry which cover whole stretches of land, likewise on the mountain slopes excellent forage and luxuriant thickets of birch and willow are to be found. In the spring the web-footed birds breed on the shores of the lakes, and hares, foxes, and wild fowl, especially ptarmigan, are in abundance. In the olden days there have certainly been many reindeer.

It is credible that the Norsemen who established themselves in these, the most fruitful regions in the fiords near Julianehaab, lived chiefly



(D. B. 1894)

A part beyond the inner end of Amitsuarssuk in "the eastern settlement".

In the foreground a Norse farm (no. 73) stood near the big lake. Its outlet is a big waterfall which flows into a little lake, which can be seen faintly between the lake first mentioned and the inner end of Amitsuarssuk. In the background on the other side of the fiord, Akuliaruserssuak mountain range is to be seen. The Farm *Foss* (Ruin group 91) stood near the head of the fiord).



(Froda 1894)

(in Danish feet).

A sketch of the territory within Amitsuarssuk lake, with the ruin groups 73, 74 and 91 (the ancient Foss).

Vandfald = Waterfall.

Sø = Lake.

Varder = Cairns.

Ruingrupper = Ruin groups.

enkelte Ruiner = single ruins.

by the breeding of cattle and not so much by the capturing of seals, as they were not obliged, like those who lived in less fruitful regions, to resort to that branch of industry, which seems to have been of less consideration for them on account of the long and difficult distances to the fiords.

The Greenlanders hardly ever come to these rich parts. Every sort of game has its field here, and no one searches a livelihood there, where many farms lay in the Norse age, maintaining many people.

Several farms are refound, but many are waiting to be found. Only a few Greenlanders from Igaliko, go hunting in the nearest parts by Kagssiarssuk, whilst the regions near Amitsuarssuk are never visited now. No living Greenlander is well acquainted with these regions, therefore all travelling in here is difficult on account of there being no guides.

This magnificent country, which the author visited in 1894 must have been the ancient *Vatnahverfi*, the name of which (*vatin* = lake, *hverfi* = groups) so excellently suits the conditions of nature.

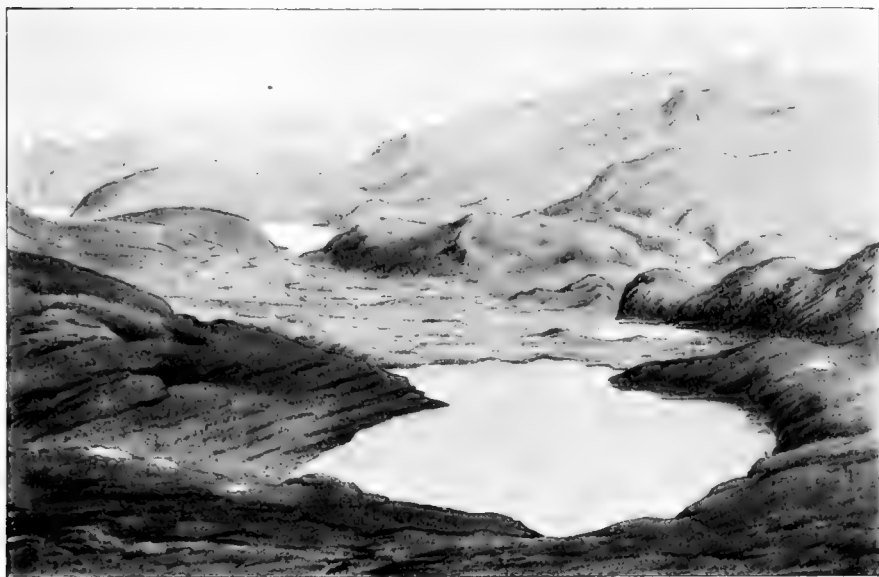
### The centre of the eastern settlement, Einarsfjördr.

We have now reached the centre of the eastern settlement where a comparatively compact colonization is found, not only on the banks of the fiords, but also in-land between the fiords. The first fiord we meet is *Igalikofjord* within Julianehaab. It is the ancient celebrated *Einarsfjord*.

IVAR BAARDSÖN says:

"When one sails into Einarsfiord a creek lies on the left hand, which is called "*Thorualzuig*" [*Thorvaldsrik*], and further up the fiord a headland lies on the same side which is called "*Klineng*", and still further in, another creek, which is called "*Graueuig*" [-vik], and still further in away from Grauevig lies a big farm, called "*Daller*" [*Dalr*]; which belongs to the cathedral. On the right hand, when one sails up the fiord to the cathedral which stands in Botnen [i. e. head] there lies a big forest, which belongs to the cathedral, and in which forest the cathedral has all its cattle both big and little.

The cathedral owns the whole Einarsfiord as well as the big island, which lies outside Einarsfiord, and which is called "*Renöoe*" (i. e. Reindeer-island) because in the autumn any number of reindeer run there, there is universal "*Vedtzhaff*" [catching of fish and whales] but not without the permission of the bishop. And on the island is the best soap-stone seen in Greenland, so naturally good that pots and cans are made of it, and it is so hard a stone that fire cannot consume it, and such big cans are made of each stone that 10 or 12 barrel can go into them. And there to the west of the land lies an island, called "*Langöe*" [*Langey*] and on that island lay 8 big farms. The cathedral owned the whole island except the tithes, which belong to Hvalsö church".



(D. B. 1894)

View from "Vatnahverfi" looking northwards, towards Igalikofjord's eastern arm (a).



(K. J. V. Steenstrup 1877)

The home fields at Igaliko.

We find mentioned in the church inventory:

"the fifth church *undir Höfða* in the east fiord, the sixth bishop-see at *Gardar* in Einarfiord".

No glaciers are found in Igalikofiord, and the fiord ice as a rule already disappears in April, after which there is open water even as late as January. The conditions of ice are therefore more favourable in this fiord than in Tunugdliarfik lying furthest north.

On the fiord's westside furthest south, a big broad fiord cuts in. It is *Kakortokfiord* the ancient *Hvalseyjarfjörðr*, more of which later. North of this, Igalikofiord's west side is very steep, and only in few places there is a trifle coast where there have been farms. *Thorvaldsvík* and *Grauevík* must be sought here. On the tracts of land further in hardly any landing places are found, and even as far in as *Sigssardlugtok*, where to judge by the ruins the big farm *Dalr* lay, landing was extremely difficult. *Sigssardlugtok* is a very interesting place, and the ruins, which lay on each side of the river *Kügssuak*, are well preserved.

The fiord's east side has partly the same appearance as the west side. A farm lay in the bay near *Ekaluit*. F. J.'s opinion is, that it is *Hafrimsfjörðr*. From there, there was an easy access to the big, rich, territory *Vatnahverfi*, which was mentioned a short while ago. It is written in *Landnama* that:

"*Hafrim* took *Hafrimsfiord* and *Vatnahverfi*".

On the fiord's east side north of *Ekaluit* long mountain flanks overgrown with thickets are found. Here the ruins of a lonely farm are seen, and there are some few copse woods most likely those mentioned by Ivar as belonging to the cathedral. Then we come to the big bay: *Igalikofiords eastern branch*, it must have been the ancient *Austfjörðr*. It is crowned by mountains, below which the ruins of three farms are found, the one of which is doubtless "*undir Höfða*" — now *Kagssiarssuk* in the bay to the south. The name suits excellently, as a mountain protuberance lies to the west of the farm. Here a church and churchyard are found.

Besides the river *Kagssiarssuk*, another one coming from the inland-ice to the N. E. disembogues into Igalikofiord's eastern branch.

Several ruins were found in 1911 up under the glacier, between the rivers, there is an afflux to the former river. — The ruin is probably that of an outfarm.

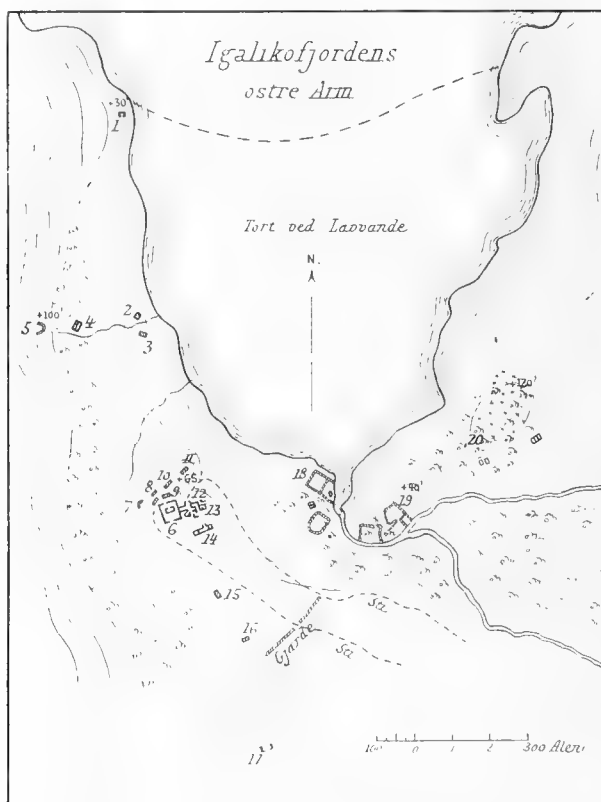
The farm *Hamarr* which is spoken of in the foster-brothers saga (refer to page 103) no doubt lay in Austfiord and is therefore one of the farms on the north side of the bay. On the tongue of land between Igalikofiord's eastern arm and its inner end, two long headlands jut out into the fiord. Between them now lies *Fox'havn*, where the steamer of the same name anchored in 1860. Here presumably the ancients had their *Skjalgsbudir* (-booths). Here the trading ships anchored, such as we have heard of in the tale about Einar Sokkisson (refer to page 124). There one sees the remains of a couple of smaller Norse ruins,





(N. P. Jørgensen 1894)

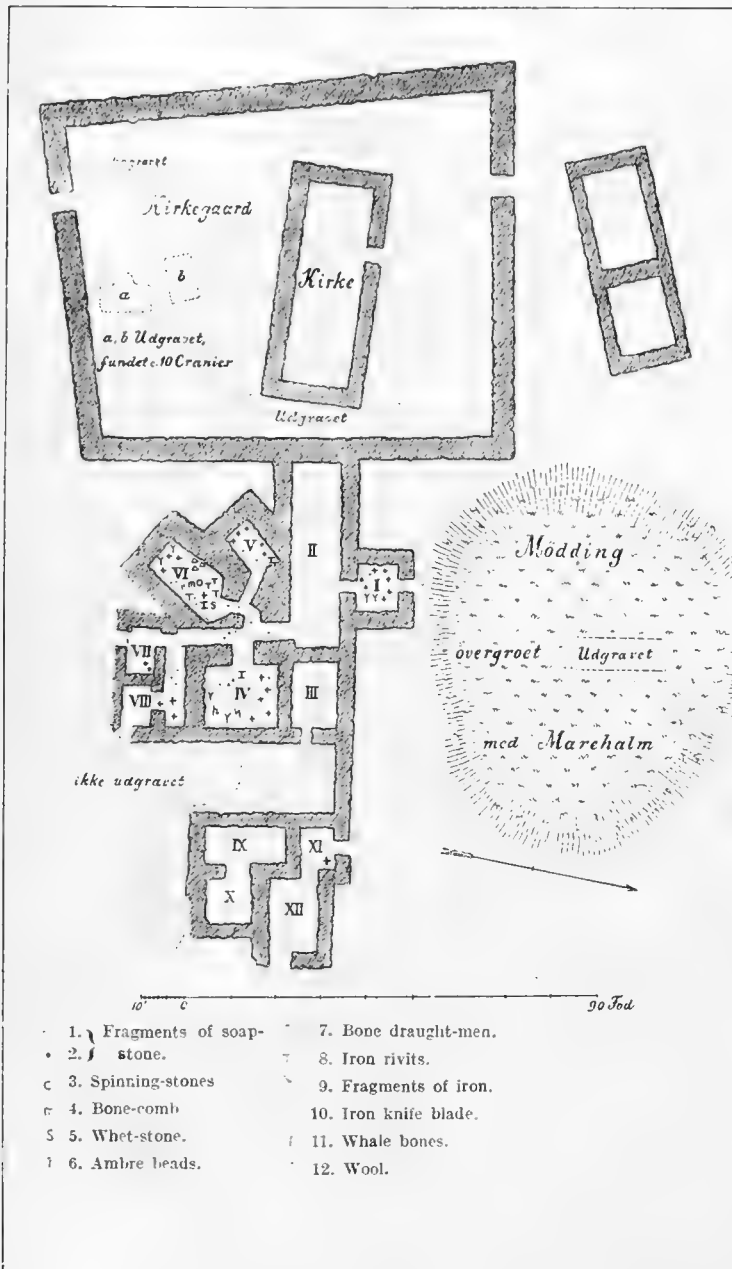
View from the heights near Kagssiatssuk  
looking south-east. In the foreground stood the farm "Undir Höfda".  
Akuliarssssuk mountain-range in the background.



(G. Holm 1880 & D. B. 1894)

The farm "Undir Höfda" (now Kagssiarssuk).  
In the east fiord (now Igalikofiords eastern arm).  
(Eastern settlement). (in Danish ellsj).

The farm houses stood near a river in shelter of a mountain ridge (Höfði) lying to the east. The ground slopes evenly upwards towards the building complex (no. 13), in front of which a big kitchen refuse-heap is to be found (12). Close by a fine ruin of a church and churchyard (6), 900 □ m area, is seen. A little well preserved ruin (1) lies near the landing place, built of stones only (a store-house). No 3 and 17 are sheep (goat) folds. The remaining ruins shown on the plan are mostly small houses. No bigger stables with pen-stones are to be seen. Although the earth was covered by a luxuriant vegetation, and there was any amount of grass, there seems to have been an insignificant number of cows. Perhaps the farm lying about 2½ miles further inland belonged to "Undir Höfda". Possibly the chief farming was carried on there. Near the mouth of the river lie enclosures and round earth dikes (18 and 19). They have most likely been "gardens" or folds. Near No. 20 many holes with ashes have been found.



(D. B. 1894)

## Kagssiarssuk ("Undir Höfda").

Ground-plan of the church (= Kirke) the churchyard (= Kirkegaard)  
and the dwelling-houses (I to XII) (in Danish feet).

"Mødding overgroet med Marchalm" = Refuse heap overgrown with lyme grass; "Udgravet" = Excavated;  
"Ikke udgravet" = not excavated". *a* & *b* = excavated, about 10 craniums found.

which very well could have been "Budir" (booths). *Löngunes*, *Thorgrim Trolle's* dwelling, and *Langaness* where his sister lived (it was as already mentioned, most likely the same farm) must be sought close to the north of the headland. Here ruins of a farm are also found.

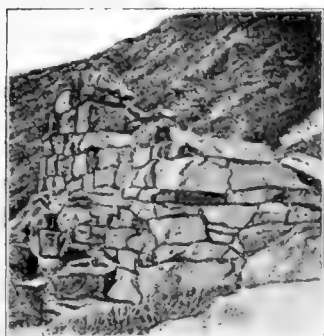
We now come to Einarsfiord's most important and biggest farm, *Gardar*, which was the home of the first Landnam's man, and where later on in the twelfth century the *bishop-see* was established. It lay near the "*Eid*" or the tongue between Einarsfiord (Igalikofiord) and Ericsfiord (Tunugdliarfikfiord) and here the country's universal assize, *Gardar-thing* was held from the beginning of the 11<sup>th</sup> century; it is also mentioned in the foster brother saga. The *cathedral* stood on the farm's homefields (Tún) besides the in- and out-houses, it was consecrated to St. Nicolaus, and was certainly in use for 300 years. As a document exists from 1409, drawn up at Gardar (ref. to p. 89 and 119).

There is only little left of the cathedral, its last shape being a cross church.

In 1894, when the author was there, the ground plan of the dimensions of the church and Norse farm were still fairly distinct, but since then nearly everything has disappeared, spoiled by the Greenlanders living there, breeding cattle on the old place where in the Norseage there had been a great number of live stock (over 100 cows).

Gardar cathedral was a very important church. The outside length was 26,40 meters (84 feet), the breadth of the nave was 11,30 m (36 feet). The original crosses breadth was 7,50 meters (24 feet). The walls of the cross were thinner than the original walls. They perhaps formed a sort of prominence which is known from the old Iceland grassturf churches, (a *Útbrotá kirkja*). Gardar cathedral was, as Schirmer remarked to us, only about 2 m. (6 feet) shorter than Olav's church in Nidaros. It seems that the cross-form first, at a later period, was added to a church that was originally smaller. This presumably happened when the bishop-see was established (1133). The cathedral is the only Greenland church which in its original state seems to have had the choir narrower than the nave. Its plan — says M. Clemmensen — resembles the first stone churches which were erected immediately after the introduction of christianity, by King Olaf Tryggvason. The plan was Irish-Anglo-Saxon. Several blocks of red sandstone, the Norse "marble" (refer to page 30) have been used in the church as well as in other houses in the bishop-see, amongst others in a big building with two entrances which probably had been the depository for wares, perhaps the tithes. One sees directly that there has been a very big farm at Gardar: which was to be expected.

The cathedral naturally had bells, and the ringing of bells is also mentioned (refer to page 124). A legend is extant amongst the Eskimoes telling of a big bell that could be heard from afar. A piece of bell metal has formerly been found on the spot. It seems the bell must have weighed 500 kilo, according to the piece of metal. The author



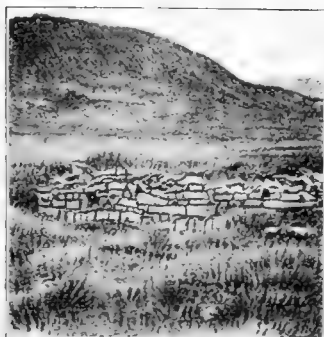
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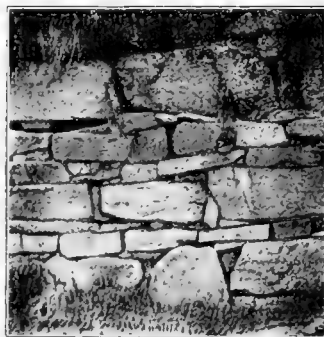
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5

(K. J. V. Steenstrup photo)

Kagssiarssuk ("Undir Höfda").

1. Ruin No. 1 on the groundplan (page 186). 2, 3, 4 and 5. The church ruin.

brought home, in 1894, a metal bar belonging to a bell. In the churchyard a number of bodies with remains of wooden coffins besides stuffs have been found. A tombstone has also been found here (page 121).

It appears both in the "Fosterbrother Saga" (page 86) and the tales of Einar Sokkisson (page 122) that *the assize* was held near the bishop's palace and that booths for the assize folk were found there. Such were well known from the Icelandic assize places. They were rectangular with walls of earth and grass-turfs, and over which a tent cover was raised during the assize.

Outside the homefield close to the dike and near the coast lay some very indistinct remains of sites, which Clemmensen thought were assize-booths. The locality excellently suits the conditions of the assize places mentioned in the Saga. Many old Greenland houses have meanwhile stood on this spot and thereby caused disturbances. Clemmensen says: "If one takes for granted, that several of the booths (like in Iceland) were joined together, and that each compartment in the sites had been a booth, then there were found about 18 booths (in any case certainly 13) in the sites" (page 91).

The assize booths were turned according to the plain, and several of them have the door turned towards it. The place was well adapted to an assize ground, it lay, as hinted at, outside the homefield, in any case near the bay, where the ships and boats lay to. — A big round fold in the vicinity has perhaps been a stable for horses.

The tale in the Fosterbrother saga about Thormod Kolbrunarskiöld, which took place at the assize, "agrees in every detail."

Finally the farm *Vík* at the innermost of the fiord is mentioned. It has evidently stood in a little creek on the north side of the head of the fiord, where there are ruins of a farm (page 97).

### **Hvalseyjarfjördr and Kambstadafjördr.**

IVAR says furthermore:

"Next to Einarsfiord lies *Hualtzöerfiord*" [*Hvalseyjarfjördr*]; there a church stands which is called "*Hualtzöefiordt*" — church.

It owns the whole fiord besides the whole "*Rambstadefiord*" [*Kambstadafjördr*] which lies nearest to it. Within this fiord stands a big royal farm, which belongs to the king, it is called "*Thyodhyllestad*" [*Thiodhildarstadir*].

A fiord inventory speaks of it:

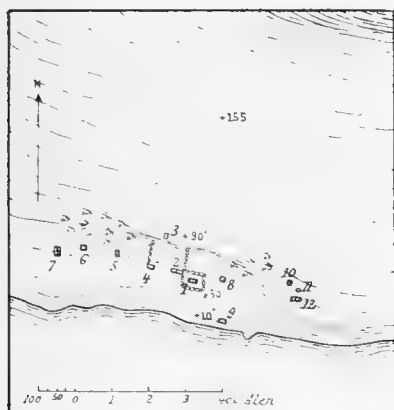
"The eleventh church in *Hvalseyjarfjördr* [now *Kakortokfiord*]"

The fiord has evidently derived its name from *Hvalsey*, an island in the middle of the fiord; the present Greenlanders call the island Arpat-sivik (refer to page 144). At the head of this fiord stands an excellently built and well preserved *church ruin* on a plain, which stretches down to the fiord from the mountain *Kakortok*. A 12—13 m high precipitous

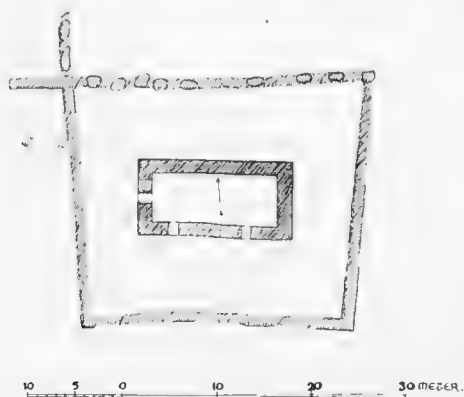


General view.

(Th. Groth 1880)



(Th. Groth 1880)  
Groundplan (in Danish ells).



(M. Clemmensen 1910)  
Church and churchyard.



The church ruin seen from the north-west. (photo)

Kakortok church ruin (ancient Hvalsey-church).

On a plain at the foot of the mountain stands the church (1) with a churchyard — together with the farmhouses (2—12). No. 10 is a circular fold. No. 5 a ruin built of big stones.



(K. J. V. Steenstrup 1888)

The church ruin at Kagssiarssuk ("Undir Höfda") (seen from the west).



(C. Wagner 1909)

Kakortok church ruin (Hvalsey-church).  
The eastern gable and part of the southern wall (inside).





(Mogens Clemmensen 1910)

The west gable (inside).



(Mogens Clemmensen 1910)

Part of the south wall (inside).  
Kakortok church ruin (Hvalsey-church).

rock runs a short way close behind the ruin, from the top of which the plain continues inland; often having considerable stony parts. The plain is very luxuriant, being almost only overgrown with heather and willow thickets. By the church ruin is a churchyard and sites of different houses, belonging to a farm, which most likely is the one where the Landnama man lived.

The *Landnamabók* says:

"A man named *Thorkel Farserk* cousin to Eric the Red on both mothers' side. He went to Greenland with Eric and took Hvalseyjarfjörðr in possession, as well as the greatest part of the tract of land between Ericsfiord and Einarsfiord, and he established himself in Hvalseyfiord. The inhabitants of Hvalseyfiord descend from him. He was exceedingly strong. Once Eric the Red visited him. As he wished to entertain his cousin well, but having no suitable boat at hand, he had to swim out to Hvalsey so as to fetch a full-grown wether and bring it back to his farm on his back; it is a little more than half a week. Thorkil was buried in a cairn on the homefield at Hvalseyfiord, and has continually reappeared [i. e. haunted] the dwellings there."

*Kakortok church* is the only one amongst all the Greenland churches which shows architectural interest. It is, according to Clemmensen, 16 m long and 8 m broad outside, the thickness of the walls being about 1,50 m. In the west end of the south side is a door, and a choir door further to the west; above these there are four windows. There is a window in the west end of the north side. In the east gable there is a choir window with a flat-arched projection over it. All the rest of the doors and windows have straight stays. The church is erected of unsplit granit stones of unequal size, which are bricklaid in clay and furrowed in lime and mortar, inside as well as outside; this is not to be found in any other church in Greenland. Doors and windows are inserted in the walls, only one having a round arch. According to an Eskimoe legend the fiord was called "*Kakortok*" (i. e. the white) because the church in olden days was so shining white that it could be seen from a great distance. It was perhaps whitewashed. The Eskimoe legend also says, that the stones used to build the church, came from the *Ujarartarfik-islands* near *Lichtenau-fiord*. Clemmensen visited this place and found that excellent building granite stones had been broken off a headland by the sea, but his opinion is however, that it is hardly likely that stones were fetched from so far, to build *Kakortok church*; the stones of which, also, to a certain degree proved to be of a different sort. Limespar could be got nearer at hand. The church had, just like old Irish churches, a nave and a choir in one, and no round choir is seen. It is, says Clemmensen, nearly related to the eldest Irish and the earliest Norwegian churches (of Irish influence) on the Orkney and Shetland islands. In which case there is nothing to hinder us from assuming that it can have been erected

shortly after Greenland having accepted christianity, perhaps no later than the year 1200, but more likely about 1126.

That it was used down to the conclusion of the Norse age is clearly stated in three parchment letters, which at one time (1625) were found at Skaalholt (Skálholt) in Iceland. The letters show that *Thorstein Olafsson* from Akre in Skagafiord in Iceland and *Sigríð Björnsdóttir*, in the year 1408, had been married in Hvalsey church "the next Sunday after the choir mass for the harvest" (14<sup>th</sup> Sept.). Thorstein was later on a law-man in Iceland and at the same time the king's chieftain.

On the west side of Julianehaab, Kangerdluarssuk inserts itself. Above the head of the fiord a mountain range, with many pointed summits, rises, which the Greenlanders have named *Kitdlavat* (i. e. comb). F. J. says, it must be the ancient *Kambstadafjörðr* (not as Ivar says Rambstadefiord) probably named after a farm *Kambstadir*. *Thiodhildarstadir* lay at the head of the same fiord, perhaps named after Eric the Red's wife. Up to now however no Norse ruins are substantiated with certainty.

In the mouth of Igalikofiord lies a big island, *Akia*, which must be Ivars *Rensö* (*Hreinsey*). Here on the island's north side broken soapstone is found from where the Norsemen evidently have fetched the stones mentioned by him.

F. J. thinks that "*Langö*" (*Langey*) mentioned by Ivar, is *Tugtutok* a big, long island deeply intersected, lying west of the entrance of the following fiord *Tunugdliarfik*. Ruins of Norse farms are found on the island.

### Eriksfjörðr.

We now come to *Tunugdliarfikfiord*, the celebrated *Ericsfjord* where Eric the Red erected his habitation at *Brattahlid*.

IVAR has written after that "Rambstadfiord" was mentioned:

"Thereafter comes "*Ericsfjord*" [*Eriksfjörðr*], and in the opening of the fiord lies an island, called "*Erichsöo*" [*Eriksey*]; half of it belongs to the cathedral and half to "*Dyurenness*" [*Dyrnes*] church. *Dyrness church* is the biggest parish in Greenland, and this church lies on our left hand when one sails into Ericsfjord. Dyrnes church owns everything within "*Mitt-fiord*" [i. e. *Middle-fiord*]. "*Mitfiord*" juts out from Ericsfjord straight north-west, and further up in Ericsfjord "*Sollefielldts*" [*Solarfjöll*] -church lies. It owns the whole of Middle fiord. Further up the fiord lies "*Leyder*" church; it owns everything up to the inner end and from there as far as "*Burfelldts*" [*Búrfell*] and everything beyond Burfell belongs to the cathedral. There [i. e. near Leyder church] lies a big farm, called "*Brattelede*" [*Brattahlid*], where the law-man used to live.

Now it is related of the setting out to the islands: further west of "*Langöe*" [*Langey*] lay four islands, which are called *Lamböer* [and Lamb-

öer]-sound [*Lambeyjar, Lambeyjarsund*]. And it is called "Lamböer" sound because it lies between "*Lamböö* and *Langöe*". Nearer to Ericsfiord lies another sound called "*Fossasund*". The islands mentioned belong to the cathedral, and the Fossasund lies at the entrance to Ericsfiord.

North of Ericsfiord lay two creeks called "*Ydrevig*" [*Ytrivik*] and "*Indrevig*" [*Innrivik*] [outside and inside creek] as they lie thus."

*Tunugdliarfikfiord* is one of Greenland's most beautiful fiords and is very luxuriant at its inner end, especially on the west side. There is a narrow tongue (the *Igaliko-tongue*) between this fiord and Ericsfiord, and to the north of it rises *Igdlerfigsalik* which is about 2000 m high.

North of this, the *Korok bay* intersects itself towards the inland ice, which transmits a glacier here, and which calves into the fiord.

It is surrounded by high, percipitous mountains and completely uninhabitable. It is the same case with the whole of Ericsfiord's east-side, south of the *Igaliko tongue*. Not a single farm is to be found. But on the other hand there are several farms along the fiord's west side and especially on both sides of its head.

The fiord ice usually disappears out of *Tunugdliarfikfiord* in June, sometimes as early as April. At the end of October or the beginning of November they are already frozen.

The ice-bound icebergs from *Korok glacier* break away with the fiord-ice in the spring. Almost directly afterwards the fiord can be free of ice, but after the increasing of the calving — which is worst in the spring — every now and then icebergs float out. As the out-stream becomes more rapid on account of the rivers being filled with water, these icebergs disappear more and more and towards autumn, in September, the fiord can even be quite free of ice; as when it begins to freeze again the calving of the glacier stops. In the spring a little drifting ice is seen from without, but towards summer it is kept outside by the current. Along the west side of the fiord there is a high mountain range, *Ilimaussak* (1500 m) which occupies the peninsula between *Tunugdliarfik-* and *Sermilikfiords*.

It falls off towards the north (to about the height of the *Igaliko-tongue* of land) and goes over to an undulated piece of land filled with small lakes. There were many farms in this part as well as on both banks of the fiord, having had excellent living conditions. Still further north, nearest the inland-ice, lay beautiful Alp-landscapes, and amongst them *Ulunguarssuak* (1300 m) rears itself.

The end (*Kingua*) of *Tunugdliarfikfiord* is prolonged by a magnificent valley with a big river flowing through it. The ten farms, which, to judge by the ruins, had stood at the head of the fiord, have certainly made great use of the mountain pastures. Especially the farms on the west side had exceptionally good pasture on the undulating ground, which stretches as far as *Isefiord's* inner branches. In several places the farms have been able to supply themselves with fuel, the rivers in those days had, as well as now, excellent salmon-fishing and the fiords



(D. B. 1894)

a. Groundplan (in Danish feet).



b. Houses and folds (in Danish feet).

1. Dwelling-houses (see page 163) with a refuse-heap in front.
- 2, 3. Group of stables with hay-barns.
4. A round cattle-pen.
- 5, 7, 8. Small goat or sheep folds.
5. Goat or sheep stable with a barn.
- 9, 10, 11. Store-houses(?).
12. Sheep fold.

a—b. The farmstead at Tunuarmiut, near Nunasarnak —  
Tunugdliarfik (Eric'sfiord).  
(Eastern Settlement).



Kitdlavat range.  
(Eastern settlement).

(A. Kornerup)

abounded in fish. Great profit was also gained through the hunting of hares, foxes, web-footed birds and the like. Reindeer were also found in these parts but they have disappeared since then; the capturing of seals could also have taken place but it cannot have been as good as in Sermilikfiord which was filled with ice. Tunugdliarfikfiord's excellent hunting and fishing grounds are now uninhabited, but are chiefly made use of by the inhabitants near Igaliko, the neighbouring fiord.

On the west side of the head of the fiord near *Kagssiarssuk* a church is found on the site of a big Norsefarm. Here presumably *Brattahlid* has stood.

It is one of the best, if not *the* best position in the whole fiord for a farm, as it has a specially superior upland to the west.

Somewhat more south on the fiord's east side the 5500 feet high mountain *Igdlerfigsalik* towers (north of the Igaliko tongue). It is certain to be the ancient (*Búrfell*). Beyond these two localities in Ericsfiord no other can for the present be settled with certainty. We must be content with surmises.

Finnur Jónsson supposes *Dýrness* to be the broad headland on Ilimaussak peninsula between Tunugdliarfik and Sermilik.

When it is said that "*Midfiord*" (i. e. middlefiord) issues from Ericsfiord to the N.W., one is inclined to think it the sound, S. of Ilimaussak, but the difficulty is this, that in another place the "*Midfiorde*" [*Midfirðir* i. e. "middle fiords"] are mentioned, which F. J. thinks lay inside Sermilik (more of which further on), and he assumes that the two names designated the same place, therefore he thinks it is a mistake when *Midfiord* is said to issue from Ericsfiord. It is on the whole very unfortunate that misunderstandings have evidently taken place in the later translations or renderings of Ivar's original records. It is further said, that the church under the *Solarfjöll* [*undir Sólarfjöllum*] stood in Ericsfiord, but it owned the whole "*Middle fiord*". But in another place meanwhile it is written that the church on *Solarfjöll* stood in *Isafjörðr*.

The church inventory's eighth church in *Brattahlid* is evidently the same as the above mentioned *Leider* church (= in Icelandic: *Hlidar*, i. e. the abbreviation of *Brattahlidar*).

Landnama says:

"*Eric the Red* thereafter annexed Ericsfiord and lived at *Brattahlid*; but *Leif*, his son, after his death."

Leif's son *Thorkel* also lived at *Brattahlid* and here (1002) *Thorfin Karlsefni's* and *Gudrid Thorbiörnsdaughter's* wedding was held, likewise the plan of the great Vineland journey was laid here. Later on the lawmen lived on the farm. In the middle of the eleventh century *Skald-Helgi* is mentioned, and we knew of *Sokki Thoresson* since the first half of the twelfth century.

The ruins of *Brattahlid* (refer to Frontispiece) lay exceedingly picturesquely on both sides of the mouth of the little river, *Kagssiarssuk*, and

behind, the ground rises towards the undulating land which lies between Tunugdliarfik and Tasiussak; but no specially high or steep grassy slope is to be found on the spot. The farm consists of a dwelling house, (No.3) and twelve outhouses (Stables, depositories etc.) surrounded the dwelling house up to a distance of 300 meters. The dwelling house proper is 25 meters long,  $7 \times 14$  meters broad and consists of seven compartments. The chief room was the most easterly, from it a long passage goes westwards. To the left there is the firehouse or kitchen — discernible by its great masses of charcoal, and bones etc., besides having an exit to the refuse heap, on the south side of the house. At the end of the passage is the "Skáli" (i. e. sleeping house) with a platform. Three other compartments lie to the north, one (to the west) in which pieces of weaving stones were found, one (in the middle) perhaps a meat cupboard or larder, and a bigger compartment with a special exit (towards the north). In the immediate vicinity of the house stood a "Skemma" (warehouse). The other ruins of the farm are 2 or 3 horn cattle, sheep or goat stalls with hay barns, 5 provision houses and three or four folds or enclosures for hay stacks. Amongst the ruins just north of the brook stands a little church (about  $15,40 \times 850$  meters), built of stone with a churchyard. —

It is most likely the oldest church in Greenland, built by Thiodhilde Eric's wife. If one mounts the hill above this part of the farm, one finds a new group of outhouses (No 28—34), consisting amongst other things of cowstalls with appertaining hay barns. Finally there are ruins of a little secluded farm — a so called "Kot" — about one kilometer away south of the head farm's homefields, near a smaller river. Here one sees the remains of a dwelling house, stables, folds, and a fence (No. 1—7). There are some sheep folds at some distance from the farm in a northly direction.

We will now briefly mention some other historical places in Ericsfiord:

*Stokkaness* was erected by Thorbiörn Vifilsson, who moved to Greenland at Eric the Red's invitation. The farm lay opposite to Brattahlid, possibly near Kiagtut, where ruins of a farm are found on a little headland. Thorbiörn's daughter, the renowned *Gudrid*, spent several years of her youth here at Stokkaness, until she married and moved to Brattahlid. — When it is said of *Tormod Kolbrunarskald* that he, during his stay at Stokkaness, took a boat and went with *Egil* to Einarsfiord, one must have forgotten here, that one could not row from the one fiord to the other but one had to cross the Igaliko tongue of land. — *Tormod's cave* lay opposite Stokkaness. Here Skuf and Biarni, who at the time were staying at Stokkaness, sought out their friend Thormod. The farm, where the couple Gamli and Grima lived, lay at the head of Ericsfiord, "close to the glaciers". The place cannot be pointed out more accurately.

In the church inventories a church at *Hardsteinaberg* (i. e. whetstone

mountain) is mentioned. At *Síðdlisít* one has found ruins on the west-side of the fiord south of Brattahlíð; but no church is substantiated.

With regard to the farm *Solarfjöll*, which several times has been mentioned as standing in Eric's fiord, and where presumably the above mentioned church stood, nothing settled can be said before the church is found.

### On the top of Búrfell.

The best view of the eastern settlement's centre is got from the top of a mountain, where we will beg our readers to accompany us.

*Igdlerfigsalik* is a mountain about 5500 feet high, towering up with very precipitous flanks, from Tunugdliarfíki fiord (Eric's fiord) north of Igalíko tongue. It is the ancient *Búrfell* a name often found in Iceland, for mountains of the same construction as *Igdlerfigsalik*, resembling the ridge of an isolated house with a hipped roof. The geologist K. J. V. STEENSTRUP ascended the mountain's highest point on the 18<sup>th</sup> July 1888, accompanied by a Greenlander from Igalíko, named OLE. Under very unfortunate atmospheric conditions they accomplished however their ascent, and on the top they had found some stone circles partly covered with snow, which they however could not observe more closely.

I had, in 1894, determined to try whether or not I could be more fortunate. Ole was the only remaining Greenlander who had been up there, and before Steenstrup, as far as it is known, no one had ascended the mountain in our days.

In calm weather we came rowing into Tunugdliarfíki fiord in our "Umiak". The mist cleared by degrees, it became stifflingly hot, and the gnats were very disagreeable. We raised our tent on the coast, near Igalíko tongue and took a short afternoon rest, as we intended ascending during the night so as to reach the summit at day-break. We started about seven o'clock in the evening. It was still light and the gnats continued to swarm, and a mist lay on the summit of *Igdlerfigsalik*. I packed my knapsack with some food and drinkables, besides a little tobacco; Ole took it on his back — we then wandered off straight across the flat tongue of land (Eið), which divides Tunugdliarfíki (Eric's fiord) from the inner end of Igalíkofiord (Einar's fiord). There was a glorious evening tone over the landscape. When we reached the tongue's easterly part we looked across the green plains where at the foot of the mountains the cattle grazed near Igalíko's habitations where the Greenlander's cows are kept, and from a dark cluster of houses smoke rose up into the air. Out in the bay we saw a rock on which a Norse ruin lies, others lay near the habitation itself — where once upon a time the bishop-see Gardar with its big cathedral stood. A kayak man crossed the fiord home to his flesh-pots in Igalíko.

We then turned to the north into a magnificent valley, through



West. North. Greenland east coast in distance.



Tunugdliarfik  
(Eriksfjord)

The view from the top of Igdlertfigsalik (Bürfell).

(Daniel Bruun 1896)



Tunugdliarfik  
(Eriksfjord)

The view from the top of Iganek at the inner end of Igalikofjord (Einarsfjord) looking south.

× Gardar Bishopsee.

(N. P. Jørgensen 1904)



which a river flows, coming from Igdlersfigsalik, the summit of which we suddenly saw rearing high up in the distance, free of clouds.

It was half past eight when we reached the end of the valley, and we now ascended a very steep mountain flank to a table-land, which was deserted and barren, although it only lay about 1000 feet above the level of the sea. We passed along it until nine o'clock when we started on the real ascent in a somewhat slanting direction towards the most southern of the mountain's two summits, between which a sharp narrow crest ran. It was now dark and we had to proceed carefully, step by step in the loose disintegrated syrenite, of which the surface of the mountain consisted right up to the top. At half past ten we crossed a turbulent river by a natural ice bridge. There was dead silence, and we clearly heard the icebergs "calving" down in Tunugdliarfikfiord outside the mouth of the Korok bay, at the head of which a glacier disembogues. Here and there we crossed slippery hard-frozen snow levels; but otherwise there was only gravel and stones on which our feet slipped. Every now and then we stood still awhile so as to regain our breath; but only once we sat down for a minute to refresh ourselves with a piece of bread and a little cold coffee — but the icy seat and the cold air soon made our warm bodies tremble, so that we had to proceed at once. The moon had now risen, and shone over the mountains and valleys — far below. We reached the southern top at half past twelve, from here we continued along the narrow crest, which at times was only a few paces broad sloping steeply downwards on each side, and which in many places was furrowed by cracks, which we had difficulty in crossing. In one place an accident nearly happened; but when it became lighter we got on better. From the crest with its dizzy precipices on each side, we obtained by degrees a magnificent view. The snow gleamed fantastically on the high peaks and slopes as well as on the mighty levels of the inland ice; but down in the clefts and valleys the twilight still lingered. Not the slightest sound could be heard in the deep silence all round. We reached the most northern summit all safe and sound about half past one, after nearly seven hours of incessant wandering. It was not long before the sun rose on the northern heavens, spreading the most enchanting tinges of colouring over a glorious clime which unfolded itself before us with glaciers, mountains and fiords. I hastened to draw what I saw, but it was bitterly cold, and I had difficulty in holding the pencil between my fingers.

In a little cairn by a big natural stone-block we found a corked glass bottle and in it a visiting card, on which was written:

"K. J. V. Steenstrup and Ole from Igaliko 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1888. We saw nothing beyond the two stone circles, as there was a blinding snowstorm."

I wrote on the same card "19<sup>th</sup> July 1894. D. Bruun and Ole. Glorious weather."

We then corked it properly again — until the next time some one comes up to these solitudes.

We soon found the two “stone circles” between disintegrated syri-nite. We examined them as well as we possibly could, in great haste, and got the impression that originally they possibly were the remains of square houses, which evidently were not of Eskimoe origin. They were probably used by people who were to try to discover the ship, that ought to steer for the fiord, before it was too late.

It was a melancholy spot to sit on with the eternal, unchangeable view, which is the same now as it was then, when the last out-looker of the Norse age stared to the south west towards the entrance of Eric’s-fiord — finally to wander down without hope to the last maintainers of Norse culture in this country.

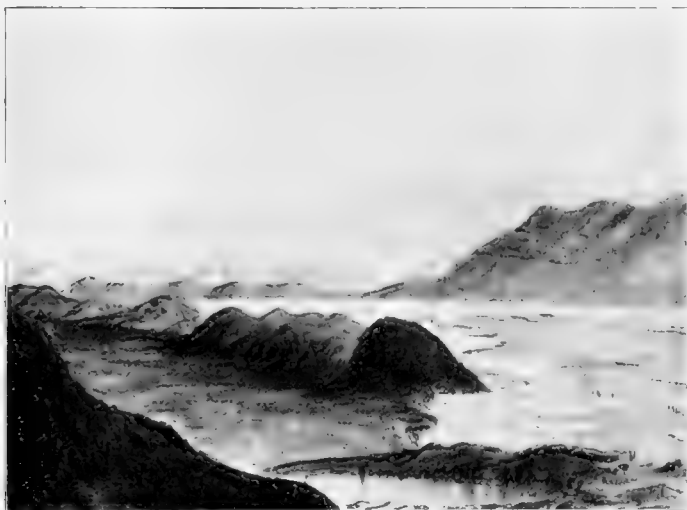
The view from this spot was imposing: we saw *Nunarssuits* summit in the south west, which presumably was the ancient “Hvarf” and the point all sailors steered by so as to reach the eastern settlement’s centre. — Gazing from there towards the west one saw mountains, fiords and to the north the inland ice’s yellow-white levels. It stretched far and wide, even as far as the snow-clad peaks to the east. In other words our eye wandered from the west coast’s mountains to the east coast’s ice-clad summits — across the far stretching ice-level, out of which small peaks reared up here and there — pointed and untouched by the wasting ice-stream which otherwise rounded off everything.

Towards north west we thus saw a mountainous part in the ice — “*Nunatak*” — It was the complex of rocks called *Apútajútsok* which was visited in 1893 by first lieutenant (now commodore) T. V. GARDE, with his companions on their well known ice tour.

The whole of this mighty plain of ice, which seems so infinitely monotonous and tranquil, hankers after and strives to reach the sea on account of the force of gravity, being incessantly pressed and pushed onwards by an irresistible interior pressure. — Just to the north of us we saw its white ice-stream flowing down into the *Korok* bay, which lay far below us between the mountains, some of which were from 1200—1300 meters high, and the peaks of which had never been touched by ice. They are just as virginal as *Niviarsiat* itself (i. e. The virgin summit) which lies, like an island, in the arctic ocean beyond the coast mountains.

Towards the west the ice pushed itself down into *Sermilikfiord* (the ancient *Isafiördr*) through two openings, the one of which we saw, filling the inner end of the fiord with icebergs and fragments of ice.

Other ice-streams pressed on towards *Igalikofjord*’s eastern arm and towards *Kiagtut* in *Tunugdliarfikfiord*, without however reaching right down to the water; they had to be satisfied with sending their melted, clay filled masses of water down through rapid rivers.



(D. B. 1894)

Sermilik (Ísafíord)  
seen from the south. A Norse farm has stood in the foreground.  
Ilimaussak to the right.



(N. P. Jørgensen 1894)

Kangerdluarssuk (Utiblíksfiord).  
A side fiord to Sermilik. A Norse farm stood on the tongue  
of land in the foreground.

Between the inland ice and the sea we could see nearly all the points mentioned in the saga and which we had visited or would visit in time.

Eric's fiord lay before us at full length. To the south west we saw its mouth, and east of the fiord "Redekam" (now Kidtlavat) elevated its ridge and "numerous teeth" (pointed tops). We followed the fiord further inwards, past the tremendously high mountain range *Ilimaussak* (to the west of the fiord), the southern part of which, as already mentioned, was probably the *Dyrness* of the Norsemen, and which red layer of sandstone glowed in the sun. — We then fixed our gaze on *Igaliko* tongue ("the Eid") between Eric's and Einar's fiord, and our eye glided further along the first named, following its slight bend. West of the fiord a comparatively level land, lying between Tunugdliarfik and Tasiussak-bay, was seen, with many mountain lakes; it was a branch of Sermilik (Isefiord). In this bay pieces of ice gleamed, possibly broken off the glaciers in Sermilik.

*Tasiussak* was, as we shall see directly, most likely one of the old "Midfirdir," where several large farms lay. On the west side of Tunugdliarfik we could discern *Kagssiarssuk*, where Eric the Red lived at Brat-tablid. To the north of this place a ravine was to be seen stretching from Tunugdliarfik towards Tasiussak, it was Kordlortok valley in which many Norse farms lay.

North of Tasiussak a characteristic mountain range was to be seen, *Ulunguarssuak*, with many small crests — perhaps it was the ancient *Sólarfjöll* whose position however is uncertain.

Towards the south we saw the interior of *Igalikofjord* east of the *Igaliko* tongue; here lay the bishop see *Gardar* and the assize grounds. We could also discern the entrance to *Igalikofjord*'s eastern arm the ancient "Eastfiord" with two long headlands on the north side, in the vicinity of which stood the farm *Lönguness*, and between which *Foxhavn* (the ancient *Skjalgsbudir*) was to be found. North of the interior of *Igalikofjord* the mountain *Iganek* rises, from the summit of which there is a better view across the head of the fiord, to *Gardar* and the farm *Vik* standing in its interior.

To the east and south east we saw snow-clad peaks between the fiord's inner end and the inland ice. Thus we could see the high mountains *Akuliaruserssuak* near *Amitsuarssukfiord*, and we faintly saw the watery territory east of *Igalikofjord*, the Norsemen's *Vatnahverfi* where a number of farms lay.

Here a mist however covered a part of the landscape, and it increased as the sun rose. Light clouds began to appear in our vicinity, and Ole therefore began to hasten our departure. We chose to go straight down by a very steep mountain path from the crest to the north.

It was extremely difficult, and it became worse, as we, lower down, had to cross an ice covered — mountain wall. Here we had to cut our



(F. Gross after a sketch by D. E. 1902)

A very big Icelandic farmstead (Kalfafellstadir on the south east coast).  
This shows how the houses are spread on the homesteads, likewise in Greenland.

steps into the ice with our alpernstocks — and we succeeded in continuing our journey safe and sound.

At ten o'clock in the morning we reached our tents, after an absence of a good fifteen hours.

The same evening we went through Tunugdliarfikfiord in our "*Umiak*" reaching the sites of *Brattahlid* at midnight.

### Breidafjördr and Isafjördr.

*Sermilikfiord* with its outer continuation *Ikerssuak*, lay, as already indicated to the north of Tunugdliarfik. The names of these fiords agree precisely with the ancient ones: *Isafjördr* and *Breidafjördr*, as the present Greenlanders, and the ancient Norsemen each of them named the fiords according to their nature.

IVAR writes after having mentioned Ericsfiord:

"Further more "*Bredfiord*" [*Breidafj.*] lies to the north, and in that fiord lies "*Myouafiord*" [*Mjóvafj.*] after that "*Eynerfiord*" [*Eyrafj.*] further to the north, then "*Burgerfiord*" [*Borgarfj.*], then "*Lodmunderfiord*" [*Lodmundarfj.*] and nearest to that, east of the eastern settlement lies "*Issefiord*" [*Isafj.*].

All these islands are inhabited."

Biörn Jónsson names:

"*Isafiord*, out of it issues *Utibliksfiord*, after that the *Midfiord* are the most inhabited — —."

In the church inventory is written:

"the ninth church under *Sólarfjöll* in *Isefiord* (and) the tenth and eleventh in *Hvalseyfiord*, the twelfth at *Gardaness* in the *Midfiords*."

*Isafiord* and *Breidafiord* are not mentioned in *Landnama*, where of we dare conclude that they were not colonized at once.

The surroundings of *Sermilikfiord* are grand. The inner end, near the glaciers, is a high mountainous landscape with precipitous coasts which have never been inhabited. If from the head one goes, southwards, one finds three bays on the east side, *Tasiussak*, *Tasiussarssuk* and *Kangerdluak*, excellently adapted to colonization, and here six farms are to be found, whereof the four of them lay near the bay (*Tasiussak*) furthest north. Of these farms especially the one near *Tingimiut* is very big.

Here the dwelling was excavated in 1894 (refer to p. 208—211).

Another fairly big farm lay at the inner end of *Tasiussak* bay towards S. E. not far from the former.

On the fiord's west side the ruins of two farms in the bay near *Ekaluit* are to be found. These farms have been specially unfortunately situated with regard to communication with the outer world, as the ice blocks all access to them, even during the greatest part of the summer, it was a long and difficult way along the coast to two, more southern, farms lying close by north of *Kangerdluarssuk* bay. In this bay, which is nearly





The northern glacier in Sermilik fiord.

A. J. sen 1894)



Ruin Group No. 2.

(Th. Groth 1880)

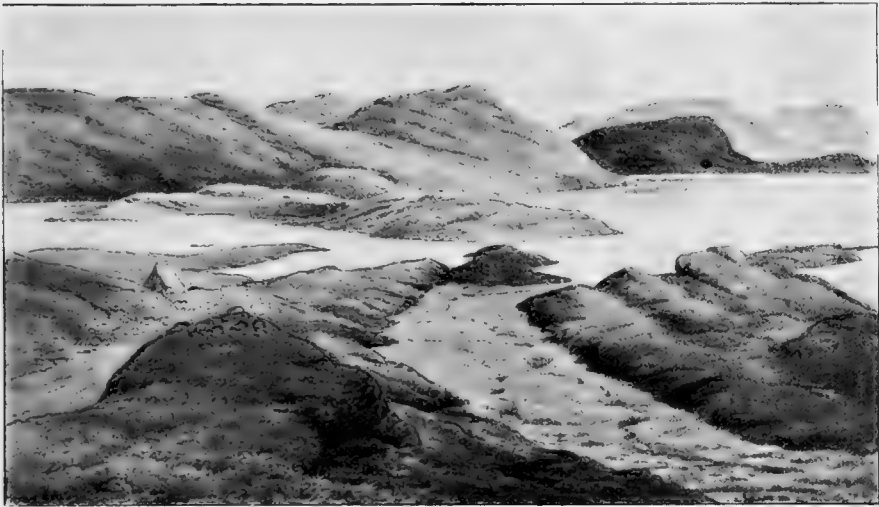
A large farm near Tingimiut in Tasiussak bay in Sermilik.  
(The eastern settlement).

On this exceptionally large farm 23 houses etc. were found; they consisted of 1 dwelling, 3 stables with pen-stones, with adjusted hay-lofts, 6 cattle folds, 4 provision houses, and 1 possible sheep or goatstable, in all 15. Furthermore the ruins of 8 smaller out houses are to be found.

The ruins stand in three groups:

A. The dwelling stands furthest east (refer to next page). Near the dwelling is a kitchen refuse-heap and 3 provision-houses lie in the vicinity, besides a building, the western half of which is a stable and the eastern half is a hay-loft. The stable is 13 feet broad inside, and is furnished with pen-stones.

B. Somewhat further away, stands a building, between the latter group and the following one (C), its eastern end is a hay-loft, and its western half is a 10 foot broad and a 30 foot long stable with pen stones along the one wall (a horse stable?)



Tingimiut. General view.

(D B. 1894)

C. The group furthest west, about 550 m. from A, consists of 9 ruins; 1 stable with pen-stones (13 feet broad inside) on both sides (cowstable), a hay-loft at the eastern end. One elongated building divided into three parts (sheep or goatstable); and close by, 3 small houses (stables or enclosures for hay); a little further to the east are 3 more, suchlike, small houses, and finally, above this group, on a cliff, to the south stands a small well preserved, provision-house.

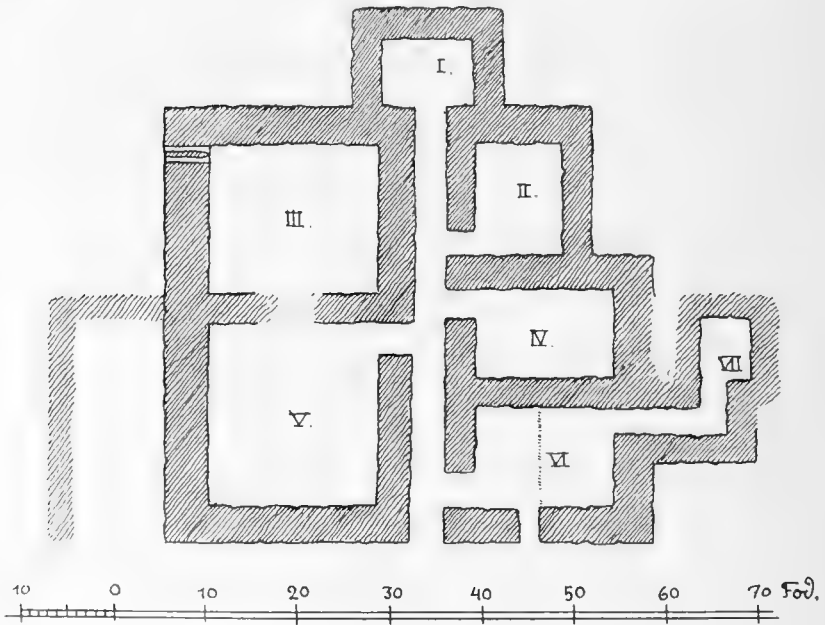
D. North of the river: 4 enclosures, of which 2 are folds for bigger cattle and 1 for sheep or goats.

E. On a little island in Tasiussak bay the ruins of a little house (refer to page 211).



(K. J. V. Steenstrup)

The wall of compartment No. III showing its zigzag formation.

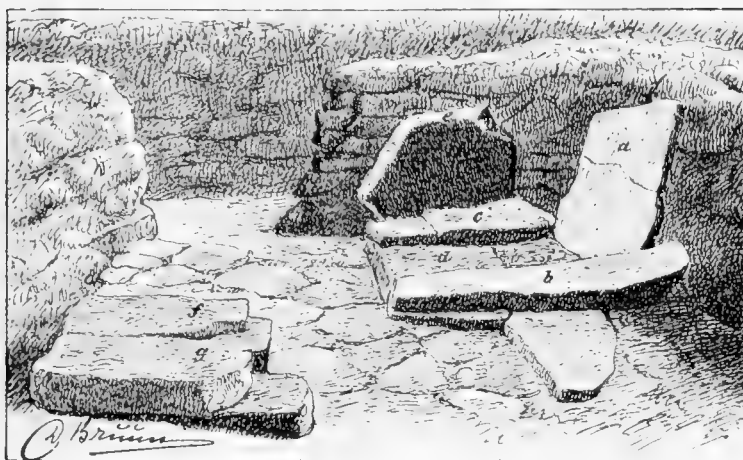


(D. B. 1894 with additions from Mogens Clemmensen 1910)

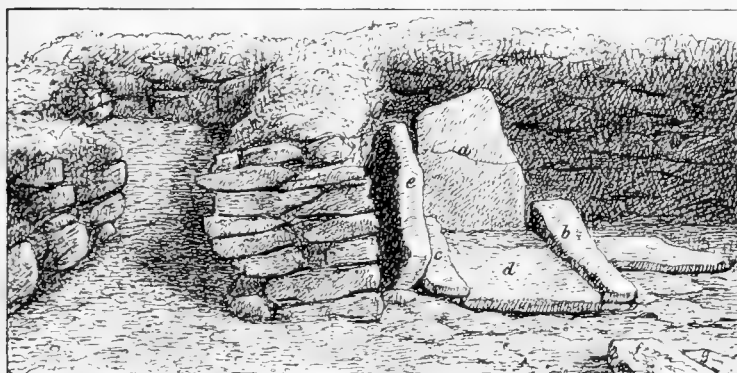
The dwelling house.

The ground plan, showing that it is of a later periode (a passage in the middle with compartments on each side and at the end). Compartment No. II is the kitchen with a fire place, the others are rooms.

The farm at Tingimiut  
(refer to No. VI on the map, page 208).



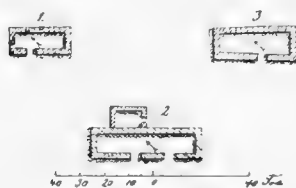
(D. B. 1894)



(D. B. 1894).

Fireplace in the kitchen (Compartment II on the groundplan).

The farm Tingimiut  
(refer to the ground plan of the dwelling house).



1. Ruin on a little island, belonging to Tingimiut farmstead ("E" on the map page 208). 2, 3. Ruins on another island, belonging to a neighbouring farm (Group No. 1).

free of ice during the summer, lies a farm on a tongue of land nearest to the centre of the three glaciers (refer to page 203). — Otherwise Kangerdluarssuk's coasts are uninhabitable.

Finally one more group of ruins is to be found south of *Kangerdluarssuk*. Access is not difficult to all the groups of ruins last mentioned.

Whilst thus we can see that the fiord was, to a great extent, inhabited at the time of the Norsemen it is not the case now-a-days. There is namely only one single place constantly inhabited, *Niakornak* on the southern side of the entrance to Kangerdluarssuk; but notwithstanding this there is a constant lively traffic of capturers and people from the neighbouring fiords. The seals breed during May in Tasiussak and Kangerdluak, and in the rest of the fiord there is better capturing of seals than in the neighbouring fiords on account of there being so much ice where the seals maintain themselves. In the summer for instance the hunters leave Igaliko in their kayaks crossing Tunugdliarfik so as to hunt in the parts near Tasiussak, and during the winter they go on the same expedition on snow-skates so as to capture seals on the ice at the breathing holes, which the animals keep open. Capturers also come from other habitations to the interior of the fiord, where on the whole there is lively traffic. The Umiaks even venture as early in the year, as April, when the fiord-ice as well as the calf-ice is driven away by a rapid current, and there is open water for a fortnight. Fuel is fetched from the thickets, and when the salmon go up the rivers in July, the Greenlanders go there in order to fish. In September the big rivers near Ekaluit are visited by people from Niakornak, when they return home from capturing and fishing in the skerries near the coasts.

The east side of *Sermilikfiord* is limited by the high *Himausak* peninsula the face of which is steep and uninhabitable. Nearly all the year round; *Isaifiord* is thus filled with calf-ice from the glaciers at the head of the fiord, therefore access by sea, to the Norse farms there, must have been as extremely difficult during the summer, in the olden days as it is now. During the winter when the fiord ice formed a glacier, all intercourse could go that way. These unfortunate conditions of communication have however, to a certain degree been redressed by a connection over land to the head of Eric's fiord, across the comparatively level land that is to be found there.

Sermilikfiord's southern prolongation *Ikerssuak* (now *Bredefiord*) has many big branches, with islands and peninsulas on its north side, and here stood some farms in the Norse age. The south side was mostly occupied by the island *Tugtutok*, where there also were farms. We remember, that this island was presumeably the ancient *Langey* with eight farms. Three of them are found, and several more are sure to appear some day when these regions will be examined more closely.

According to Ivar, *Mioaifiord* (Mjóvafj.) (i. e. 'the narrow fiord') issues from Breidafiord; it must be *Torssukátak* (i. e. 'the narrow sound')

which issues to the west of Bredefiord's southern part. Further to the north "*Eynerfiord*", "*Burgerfiord*" and "*Lodmunderfiord*" are said to be, which perhaps are the bays with the glaciers west of the issuing place Tugdlarunat on the north side of Ikerssuak.

When IVAR says that, Isafiord is "the most westerly part of the eastern settlement" one can perhaps conclude by that, that when he wrote it, the most northerly part of the eastern settlement, which we will speak of presently, was not inhabited any more, but deserted. Biörn Jónsson mentions "*Utblíksfiord*" as a side-fiord to Isefiord, in other places called "*Makleíks'fiord*."

It is most likely the above mentioned fiord *Kangerdluarssuk* issuing to the north west, in which ruins of Norse farms are to be found.

Finnur Jónsson's opinion is that the "*Midfiord*" (*Midfirdir*) mentioned are the three bays or fiords which issue from Sermilik to the east, namely *Tasiussak* *Tasiussarssuk* and *Kangerdluak*.

In one of these bays *Gardaness church* ought to be found, which is spoken of in the church inventory.

All identification will lack sure foundation, until one has been able to find the churches still missing.

In conclusion we will mention that F. J. assumes that the west coast of the precipitous, uninhabitable Ilimausak peninsula was called "*Strandir*" (the shores) in resemblance to the desert coasts of Iceland bearing a similar designation. The most southern of the Midfiord, *Kangerdluak*, he identifies as *Strandafiord* which is spoken of in an inventory.

We will now leave Sermilik and Ikerssuak and go further north along the coast through Torssukátak (the ancient *Múafiord*) which leads to the two fiords *Sermitsialik* and *Imartunek*, lying within the place of issue *Kagssimiut*. I have been told some Norse ruins have been found here in 1903.

### The most northern part of the eastern settlement.

Biörn Jónsson says, after having spoken of the Midfiord:

"Then a *Kollufiord* is mentioned another "*Dyrefiord*" (*Dyrafjördr*), thereafter "*Thorvaldsfiord*" ["*Arnlaugsfiord*" is here mentioned in another inventory] "*Stensfiord*" (*Steinsfj.*), "*Bergthorsfiord*" — then there is six days rowing, with six men in a six-oar boat to the western settlement".

By this it is seen that these fiords formed the northern part of the eastern settlement. IVAR does not mention them, presumably because, in his time they were uninhabited.

North of Cape Desolation or Nunarssuit (Hvarf?) we again find habitations in the fiords north and south of *Arsuk*, namely *Kornok*, *Ika*, *Arsuk*, *Arpagfik* and *Tigssaluk* fiords. Here eighteen groups of ruins

are found, the most of which must be deciphered as farms. To the south of these groups ruins are found in Kornokfiord, which is a twenty mile long and very narrow fiord, surrounded by mountains. At the fiord's inner end two glaciers descend down towards the water from the south, and a little further to the right at the head of the fiord a third glacier glides down almost reaching the water. Going through a narrow course of about 200 ells, one passes the second glacier's moraine formation of clay and gravel. This course is very shallow and can only be traversed by boats at high-tide. If one gets through, one comes to an opening at the inner end of the fiord, and here, close to the third glacier mentioned, stand the ruins of a big farm near a river, carrying glacier water. On the north side further up the fiord are ruins of another big farm near the lake furthest south along the fiord's west side. The Greenlanders believe in a tradition, connected to this place, of a priest having lived on the farm, whose daughter was imprisoned in a little ruin on an island. Still further south on the same side of the fiord there are ruins of sheep-folds.

The next fiord is *Ikaifiord*, a long narrow fiord; here ruins of two farms have been found.

A legend is connected with this fiord, about the last "Kablunaks" having been overpowered here after having sought refuge here from the outermost parts of the neighbouring fiord *Arsukfiord*, which lay to the north. It is reported that four men with their children escaped onto the ice, but it gave way under them and they were drowned.

In *Arsukfiord*, into which inmost creek a glacier issues, and in its nearest vicinity six groups of ruined farms are found.

Two groups of ruins have been found in *Arpagfkfiord* which is a twelve mile long narrow fiord lying to the north of *Arsukfiord*, where one of them is certainly a farm. The site of a farm is found in *Kuannitfiord*, and four such groups have been found in *Tigssalukfiord* and its nearest surroundings — the one nearest the north in the Greenland colony *Tigssaluk* ( $61\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  n. lat.). The seven out of the eighteen groups of ruins have been mentioned more or less previously by Doctor FANÖE.

The fiords in succession from south to north evidently formed the northern part of the eastern settlement: *Dyrafjördr*, *Thorvaldsfjördr*, *Arnlaugsfjördr*, *Steinsfjördr* and *Bergthorsfjördr*.

It is written in *Landnama*.

"*Arnlaug* took *Arnlaugsfjördr*; but some went to the western settlement.

One dares conclude by this that this fiord to begin with was the only one inhabited. In this case *Arsukfiord* must be the one in question because it was the best adapted to the establishing of farms and because it was the third mentioned in succession.





The inlet to Kornokfiord's inner end.  
(The northern part of the eastern settlement).

(photo.)



The head of Kornokfiord.  
A Norse farm stood in the foreground to the left.  
(The northern part of the eastern settlement).

(D. B. 1903)

### Between Eystribygd and Vestribygd.

*Tigssaluk* was, as we have hinted, the eastern settlement's northern boundary. There are 144—160 miles between this place and the outlet of Ameralikfiord, which is south of the colony Godthaab, in as much as one reckons the more direct way across the bays and the fiord outlets, or one follows the coast line. This tract, as it were, has always been uninhabited in the Norse age, as only insignificant ruins in *Biörnesund* (Agdlomersat) lying south of *Fiskeness*, and in *Fiskefiord* or *Fiskenessfiord* (on  $63^{\circ}$  n. lat.) in *Buxefiord* (south of *Ameragdla*), lying within the territory mentioned, and must be assumed to have stood outside the real settlements. We must, for the present, therefore, limit the southern boundary of the western settlement with Ameralikfiord (a good  $64^{\circ}$  n. lat.). According to the ancient descriptions, mentioned above, there were "six days rowing in a six-oared boat" between the eastern and western settlements, which excellently suits the distance between *Tigssaluk* and *Ameralikfiord*, when one reckons 24 to  $24\frac{1}{2}$  miles as a days rowing, which is the same as Captain GRAAH, states — and also that which the Eskimoes of our days, on an average, calculate a long journey. People passed along this coast every summer, where *Fredericshaab's* glacier juts out into the sea, when they went to and from the northern capturing grounds.

### The western settlement.

The region in which the western settlement's chief section lay, is the complex of fiords within Godthaab's colony, on about  $64^{\circ}$  n. lat. The country here consists of deep fiords, up to a length of 100 miles, they intersect, for the greater part, right up to the inland-ice between high mountains. Most of the Norse ruins are united here to the interior of the fiords, whilst the Greenlander's (Eskimoes) habitations chiefly lie, and lay, in the outer parts and in the skerries, but there are territories where evidently Norsemen and Eskimoes have had joint trading grounds; this is chiefly applicable to the Eskimoes' summer tent grounds, within the fiords, where their trading took place, in the vicinity of the Norsemen's farms which perhaps was the cause of the conflict that ended so fatally for the latter.

The investigation of the ruins in the western settlement in 1903, proved that a greater number of farms were to be found, than one had known of before, chiefly in and around *Ameragdla*, and that the territories at the head of the fiord were of the best in Greenland, which is sufficiently evident through the luxuriant vegetation which is still to be found on several of the homefields. It is the fertility of this soil which has been the main cause of the house sites being overgrown so that in places they can hardly be seen. Another reason, as to why only a few farms in the western settlement, could show well pre-

served ruins of dwellings and stables etc., is, that the material of which they were built, has been more liable to moulder than, for instance, the houses in Igaliko and Tunugdliarfikfiords in the Julianehaab's district, where excellent and durable building material is to be found, in the shape of the red sandstone (the "Norse marble") already mentioned.

We will now make excursions from Godthaab to the principal fiords in the western settlement; on leaving the colony we enter the *Godthaab'sfiord* lying immediately to the north of the settlement, it cuts into the country to the N. E. to branch off subsequently in a south easterly direction. We first pass the island "*Sadlen*" (saddle) with a high mountain resembling a saddle, then *Biörnö* (bear island). No Norse farms are to be found before we reach the most northern bays, where, in all, ten sites of farms lie in different places. The most important is the one found at the inner end of the bay near *Ujaragssuit*, where, amongst others the ruins of a fine square house ( $7,5 \times 5$  m) are seen, still standing with high walls. Godthaab's fiord continues from here in a S. E. direction, like *Kangersunek*, a fiord arm, at the inner end of which a glacier disembogues. In spite of the precipitous mountain flanks about five Norse farms lay near this fiord, to which the access must have been extremely difficult as the fiord was nearly always filled with calfs-ice from the glaciers.

We now return abreast of Biörnös northern end, from where another fiord arm, *Pisigsarfik*, issues. On Biörnö's northern end lies the Greenland colony *Kornok*, and when one has passed the northern end of *Storö* ("big island") which lies parallel with Biörnö, one sees an island on which the colony *Umanak* lies. We now proceed further in Pisigsarfik. Between this and the above mentioned Kangersunek lies a deeply branched peninsula, with many bays and in these a great many sites of Norse farms.

*Pisigsarfikfiord* derives its name from a high mountain with a pointed summit lying on its north side, to which an Eskimoe legend is connected about a bow and arrow shooting match between an Eskimoe and a Norseman, which ended in the latter hurling himself down the mountain. Hans Egede mentions this legend, but Rink reports it more fully. Below the precipitous mountain, Pisigsarfik, four farms stood along the fiord's northern side on the extremely narrow coast. Further in land, the mountains diminish round the inner broadening-out, which is separated from Kangersunek only by a low, narrow ridge. In Pisigsarfik's most southern bay, near *Kapisilik* scall salmon (= Kapisilik) is caught, and here a river issues, coming from the south,, passing through many lakes, and along which there were several farms. On the whole several such farms were found in different places, on the fertile but not specially high land between Pisigsarfik. Itivlek and *Ameragdlafiord* lying more to the south. These regions were not only adapted to the breeding of

cattle but also to hunting and fishing in the fiords and the rivers. Especially the little sort of fish which the Greenlanders call *Angmagssat* appear here in numbers. The *Angmagssats* appear in dense shoals in the fiords inside Godthaab, during the spring in the spawning season, as the author was able to observe in 1903.

"Near a point in Pisigsarfik they were for instance, in dense shoals, gamboling under perpetual movement. It sounded as if it were pouring with rain along the shore, as each time a light ripple washed the land, fish came with it, jumping and thwacking with their tails, as they rubbed their bodies against each other and against the rocks with the swiftness of an arrow, causing the water to spurt. It often happened that they jumped too high up onto the shore, where they lay and gamboled until the next wave either took them back again, or they died of exhaustion. We caught as many as we had need of in our hands. — Those who have never seen such a sight, cannot easily form a conception of the riches of the sea, which are forced upon one, who witnesses such a shoal of fish".

It is highly probable that the Norsemen, in their time, used like the Greenlanders do at present, the headland in Pisigsarfik and Ameralik as a place of resort during the *Angmagssat* fishing in the spring, as there are at several points reminiscences of their time. Long rows of stones are found in at least three places in Pisigsarfik, which, according to what the Greenlanders say do not originate from them, but which according to tradition, is ascribed to the Norsemen. They amused themselves — it is said — by competing as to who could hop best on one leg from stone to stone all along the row. The Eskimoes say that their forefathers were taught this game by the Norsemen, which at an earlier period was played by them on the ancient Norsemen's row of stones. Between the head of Pisigsarfik and Itivdleik there is a tongue of land a mile broad, across which an "Uniak" could be carried.

At the head of *Itivdleik* lies a big bay with a narrow inlet. The place is called *Ekalugialik*. Here the ruins of a big Norse farm are seen, in which huge sheep or goat pens are found, which are now partly under the surface of the water, bearing witness of a sinking of the ground having probably taken place since the Norse age.

At ebb the water runs out of the bay by a little water-fall into the fiord. Near this fiord ruins of several Norse farms have been found on the west side, also ancient Eskimoe tent-places which formerly were taken for Norse ruins. Along the banks of the fiord the Eskimoes have good hunting grounds. — The east side of Itivdleik is precipitous and uninhabitable. This fiord is a northerly arm of *Ameralikfiord*, of which the eastern fiord arm is *Ameragdla*. In the latter lie several groups of ruins, although the mountains are steep along both banks. In the valleys and up in the highlands the conditions for the breeding of cattle are good.

Near to *Niakússat*, on the fiord's north side, the Norse craniums

previously mentioned (page 136) were found, with the Eskimoe arrow-points sticking in them. A farm has stood on the same spot, on which a church and churchyard have most likely stood.

At the head of *Ameragdla* the sites of a big farm with the remains of a church and churchyard besides stables etc. lie, near the big headland *Kilársarfik*, and up in the mountains a few sites are still seen in places, where the Norsemen no doubt had their out-farms during the summer, even further up country, the remains of huts are still seen near lakes and rivers, where they lived for the sake of salmon fishing, being the same case up in the mountains near the inland-ice where one finds shooting walls, behind which they lurked waiting for the reindeer, also the huts in which they lived; the latter were sometimes built dome shaped, only of stones, resembling the "*Fjárborgir*" (sheep pens) in Iceland. These huts are still used by the Greenlanders on their hunting expeditions. Perhaps it is the possession of these hunting grounds which gave special occasion for the conflicts between the Norsemen and the "*Skrællings*". Here was a territory in which both of them were interested.

The grounds south and north of *Ameragdla*'s head possessed specially good pasture — beautiful valleys with thicket and grass, salmon in the rivers and reindeer in the mountains. In a south easterly direction from the head of the fiord there is a specially good region for reindeer hunting. The people undertook long hunting expeditions on foot to this place, from the dwelling places in *Godthaabsfiord*. With heavy burdens, tents, cooking utensils etc. on their backs, and their kayaks on their heads, men, women and children started off, often from the head of *Pisigsarfik*, but sometimes also from *Ameragdla*, so as to enjoy tent-life and the joys of hunting for a few weeks in this magnificent country, swarming with game. It is maintained that one of the best hunting grounds in Greenland lay near a lake; here are also the ruins of "the biggest Norse farm in the western settlement"; but the road to it crosses a river that is often swollen, which must be traversed by a fleet of kayaks tied together.

In the *Austmannadal* (i. e. Eastmens-valley) through which *FRIDTJOF NANSEN* came from his wandering straight across the inland-ice, and through which Major Paars, in the time of *Egede*, rode up to the inland-ice so as to proceed across it to "the eastern settlement", which he and everyone else believed to be on Greenland's east coast. Naturally this expedition failed, as it had not been properly arranged.

The rivers from the inland-ice convey a great deal of clay, and the inner end of *Ameragdla* is filled by a delta which is dry during ebb, and which causes great difficulty in approaching the farms in its vicinity. Two of them shall now be mentioned amongst those in *Ameragdla*, near *Ekaluit* on the south side. They lie in beautiful surroundings below a big glacier fence, which *Thorhallesen* compares to "the Copenhagen

ramparts." From the smiling and warm regions of the interior of Ameragdlá where there were many Norse farms, we come further up the *Ameralikfiord*. This fiord is, especially outside, very dangerous to navigate in an Umiak on account of frequent heavy storms. There are only a few places on the high, steep, rocky coasts where one can land. In a couple of places — in creeks or in little narrow valleys — there have been dwelling places for the Norsemen, possibly only used in the summer, when the Angmagssats had to be collected.

On the whole one can say that Ameralikfiord has hardly been inhabited outside. Here Præstefiord lies on the south side. Hans Egede however tried cereal culture here, but without success. *Hjortetakken* (i. e. "deer-horn") a very characteristic mountain with two small protuberances, which resemble the embryoantler of a reindeer buck; rears on a headland between Ameralik and a little fiord south of Godthaab. Beyond this colony lies HANS EGEDE'S *first dwelling place* near the so-called *Igd-luerúnerit* where in 1903 we found ruins on an island in the skerries.

With regard to the eastern settlement there is comparatively more material to refer to in the Saga, fiord, and church inventories etc., but if one tries to situate the names, mentioned in these written transmissions, one is under very unfortunate circumstances with regard to the western settlement, the names of ten fiords are known, but the communications, in the saga concerning the conditions of this settlement and its topographical condition are extremely slight. A farm is spoken of in Lysefiord, where Thorstein Ericsson died, the settlement being likewise mentioned a few times; but otherwise one gets no communication, and even IVAR BAARDSON is as brief as possible concerning fiords and churches, but on the other hand, his records of the destruction of the western settlement is of great historical worth (refer to page 131). He relates briefly:

"From the eastern settlement to the western settlement is a "tölt siöes" and everywhere uninhabited, and foremost in the western settlement stands a big church, which is called "*Stensness*-"church. It was at one time a cathedral and a bishop-see."

According to the different fiord and church inventories Finnur Jónsson says the fiords in the western settlement were as follows: *Lysufjördr* (from *lysa* a sort of cod-fish) with a church at Sandness (or Saudaness?), *Hornafjördr*, *Andafjördr* (church?) *Svartifjördr*, *Agnafjördr* (a church at Hóþ) *Rangafjördr*, *Lodinsfjördr*, *Straumsfjördr*, (a church) *Eyjarfjördr*.

It is possibly correct that *Godthaabsfiord* is the ancient *Rangafiord* (i. e. the crooked). The shape alone points to it, but also a church is to be found at Ujaragssuit, which must be the one in *Anavik*. It is even probable that *Ameralikfiord* is *Lysufiord*, as it is the fiord nearest the south in the western settlement.

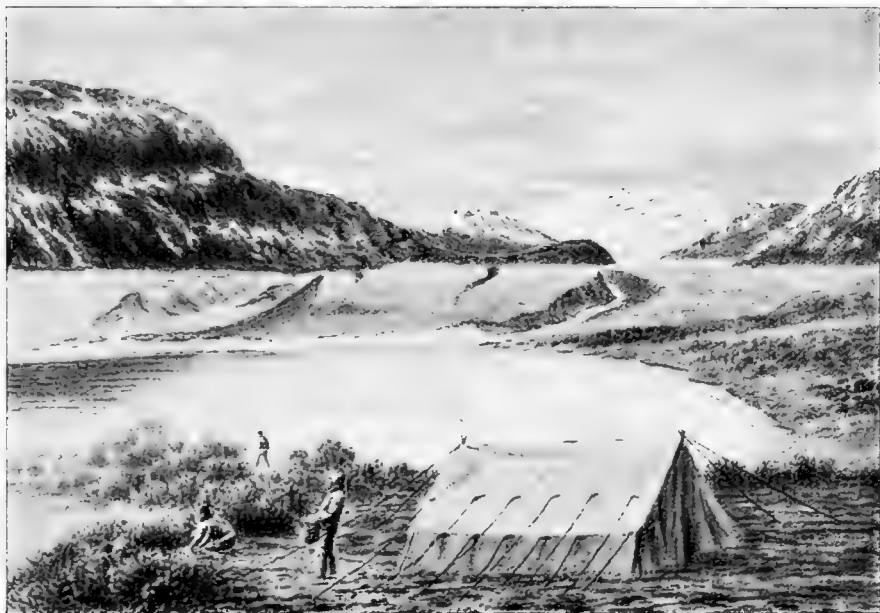
Between these two, the inventory names four other fiords, where there is excellent room for them, as is seen on the map.



Pisigsarfik fiord  
(western settlement).

(John Moller photo 1903)

Below the steep slopes on the other side of the fiord Norse farms stood.



Ekaluit (Ruin group No. 59).  
Ameragdla (western settlement).

(D. B. 1903)

Ivar Baardson's remark about the bishop-see at one time having been removed to the western settlement, it not mentioned anywhere else, but there is no reason to doubt it — in any case the latter translator of his manuscript can hardly have misunderstood this part. Where Stensness church has stood is not known. Probably it can be assumed that it was a question of the church in Godthaabsfiord, which however is no "big church", which neither can be said of the other well-known church in the region of Godthaab, namely near *Kilårsarfik* in Ameragdla, which was examined in 1903 by the author. There were only remains, as it stood on the edge of the shore, it having been washed away by the water. The church belonged to a big farm and as hinted at, was perhaps the same as the one in which Thorstein Ericsson died and from where his body was removed to the eastern settlement. There were, at the time, no churches in the western settlement. The church near *Kilårsarfik* stands as it can be seen, on a headland — and therefore the above mentioned church *Sandness* is perhaps identically the same. In another place a church is mentioned in Lysefiord "on *Steinsness*"; it must be sought near Niakussat on the north side of Ameragdla.

There are, at an estimate, substantiated between 60 and 70 farm sites, solely in Godthaab's head district — out of the 90 that should be found in the western settlement; several outfarms must be added to this, also ruins lying separately, and the number will certainly be increased by new discoveries, as the Godthaab region is far from being traversed with a view of finding Norse ruins.

It will be seen by this, that there is hardly any likelihood of finding many farm sites in the fiords north of Godthaab, as from 60—70 farms out of the 90 which belonged to the western settlement have been found in the fiords within this colony. Meanwhile there is no doubt as to the western settlement having extended far along the coast. We find written in Biörn's manuscript that from the beginning of the western settlement to Lysufiord [which evidently is incorrectly thought to lie furthest north] there is a "six days row."

If we remember there was also a six days row from the eastern to the western settlement, and that this distance suited the range from Tigssaluk to Ameralik. If we proceed for 6 days to the north along the coast, we will come to the region a little south of *Holstensborg*. Ruins have also been found at some time, here in *Ikertokfiord*, which therefore possibly may be *Eyiarfiord* the fiord furthest north in this settlement. A big island lies here in the mouth of the fiord, from which the fiord may have derived its name. Otherwise refer to the maps of the western settlement, where the rest of the fiord's identification is shown.

*Hirdlek* lies to the south of *Ikertok*, ruins are not spoken of here. It is highly probable that the following, long, narrow *Strömfiord* with a rapid current is the same as the ancient *Straumsfjördr*. There is no certainty of any ruins being here, although it has been said that such



have been found. The beautiful *Evighedsfiord* should be the same as *Lodinsfjördr*, after that *Isortok* is identified as *Leirufjördr*. The name suggests it, as both in Eskimoe and the ancient Icelandic-Greenland language it means "clayfiord" and here there is a specially strong run of clay in this fiord. Old Norse cairns and only a few sites are said to have been seen on this stretch of land, which are thought to originate from the Norse age; but on the whole the location of the western settlement is most uncertain, as the knowledge of these things is too slight to establish definite and sure results.

"The western settlement," as known was destroyed before "the eastern settlement," and by judging everything it seems through an invasion from the north. The eastern settlement may have been destroyed by the same advancing stream, or possibly by one resembling it from the east coast.

The Eskimoe inhabitants' extensive wanderings along the coast, which amongst other things, is mentioned by Egede, has now stopped as colonies have been established all along the coast line. Now they restrict their wanderings, which they undertook, chiefly to the regular tours in the summer, to the fiords for the catching of Angmagssats, the collecting of eggs, the fishing of salmon and the hunting of reindeer, besides the capturing of seals on the islands outside.

#### The coast north of the western settlement.

In the manuscript, lately quoted, reproduced by BIÖRN JÓNSSON, there is written, after the distance from the beginning of the western settlement to Lysefiord had been spoken of:

"and from there [i. e. from the western settlement's northerly point?] a six days row to *Karlsbudir*, and from there, a three days row to *Biarney*, a twelve days row round *Biarney*, *Eisuness* [from eisa—fire, embers], *Ædaness* [from ædr—eiderduck] to the north of it."

As we refer to the seventh chapter, we will only mention here that *Karlsbudir* possibly belonged to *Greipar* or the most southern capturing grounds where the "*Nordrsetumenn*" had their booths, to be used during the yearly summer expeditions to the north. *Greipar* lay to the north of the settlement proper, but certainly not far from its boundary, as it is mentioned in Bard Helgi's poem as "*the end of the settlement*." — *Greipar* has presumably been the coast south of *Disko bay* about  $68\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  n. lat. in the vicinity of *Egedesminde*, to which the period of six days row fairly suits.

It is probable that *Biarney* is the *Disko* of our day, and that *Ædaness* and *Eisunes* lay on the peninsula *Nugarssuk*, where amongst other things, there is coal. If such be the case, we probably have the other *Nordrsetumenn's* capturing ground here, namely *Kroksfiardarheidi* (*Kroksfiord* heath). It could take three days to row from *Karlsbudir*

in Greipar to Biarney, and twelve days round the latter with extra excursions to the *Nûgssuak peninsula's* north west coast. Here, curiously enough a so-called "Bear trap" has been found, which does not originate from the Eskimoes; it lies one mile to the north of *Nûgssuak* ( $70^{\circ}\frac{3}{4}$ ° n. lat.). It is most likely built by Norsemen or whale fishers.

This place was however not the most northern on Greenland's west coast, visited by the Norsemen — but perhaps the most northern which they regularly visited each summer.

We have heard of the runic stone on the island *Kingigtorsuak* on  $72^{\circ} 55'$  n. lat. north of *Upernivik* — and in all probability they have reached much further north on some of their expeditions as intimated previously (refer to p. 105—106).

Ivar writes after having mentioned Stensness church and the destruction of the western settlement by the Skrællings:

" — There to the north further away from the western settlement lies a high mountain, which is called "*Hemeltrachsfeld*" [i. e. the mountain rearing towards heaven], and no man may sail further than this mountain, who wishes to keep his life on account of the sea abysses, which lay everywhere in the sea."

Its situation is indistinct — is it "*Devils Thumb*" in the entrance of Melville bay?



A Norse head

carved out of a walrus tooth, 4 cm high,  
found at Klarsauk (western settlement).

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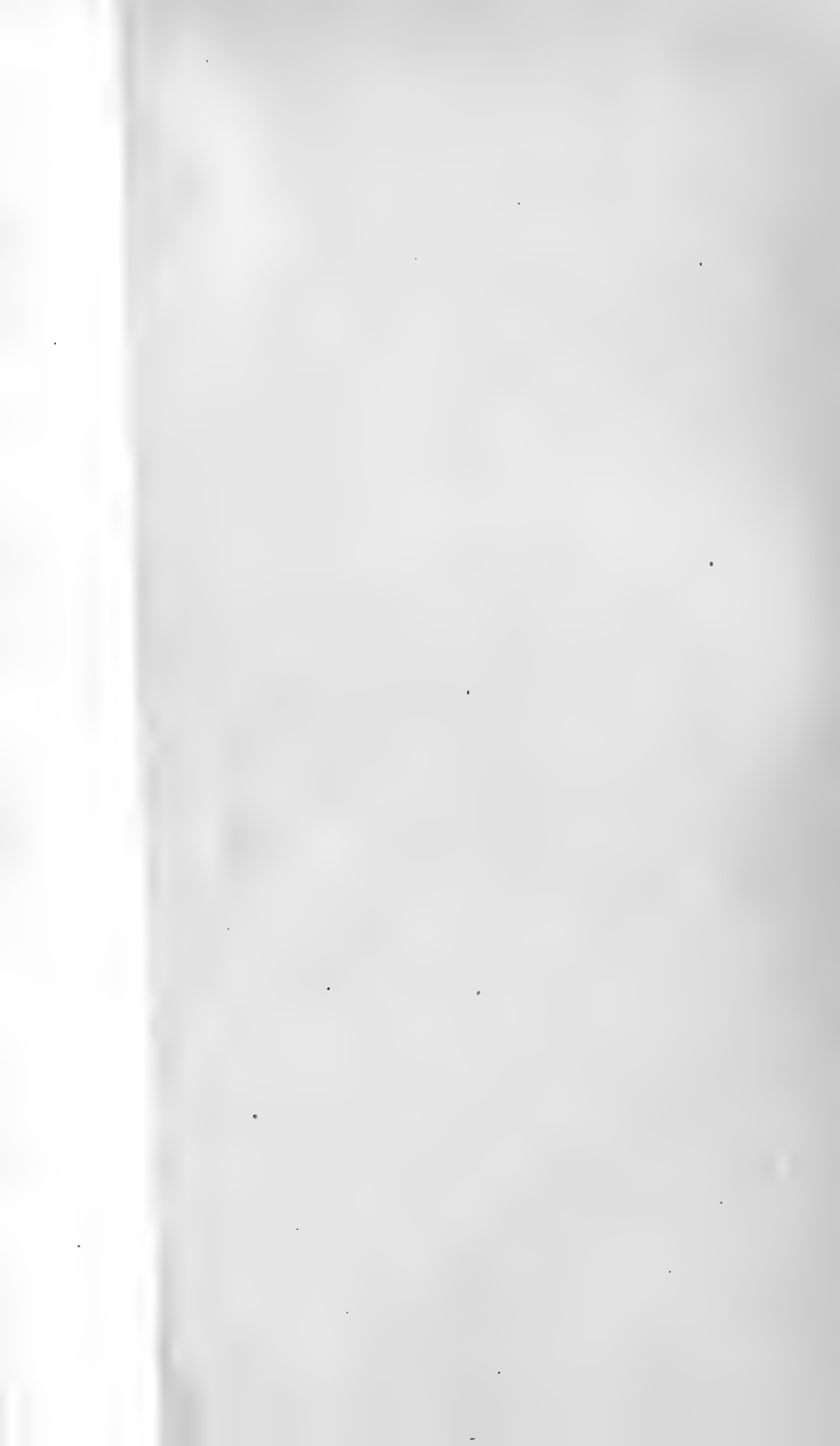
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### Table of Errata.

Page.	Amendment.	
23.	A. Jessen	Froda
84.	Line 12 from above. Before the word <i>As</i> affix "	
85.	Whett-stones.	Whet-stones.
86.	Line 11 from above. After the word <i>thereby</i> affix "	
93.	P. Vibeck.	P. Vibæk.
96.	Line 20 from below. Before the word <i>Skuff</i> affix "	
96.	Line 18 from below. After the word <i>family</i> affix "	
195.	Line 19 from below. Eriksfjördr.	Eiriks fjördr.
195.	Line 14 from below. Eriksey	Eiriksey





A map giving a general view of the ancient course precepts.

(With Gustav Storms interpretations concerning Vineland.)

**1) From Norway direct to the eastern settlement (Eystri Bygd):**

Leaving Hernum (islands near Bergen) going towards the west to Hvarf in Greenland (there where the map has «Eystri Bygd»); as one goes north round Hjalaland (Holland), one could just see the land, thereafter south round the Færoe islands, so that one saw half the height of the mountains, to the south round Iceland, so that the sea birds and whales could be seen (in one place the distance is given as 48 miles), after which one came to the high land in Greenland, which is called Hvarf. The day before, another high mountain is seen, which is called Hvidserk (in the vicinity of Greenland's southernmost point), and below (between?) these two mountains — — Hæriofssness lies, and near to it is a harbour, which is called Sand, which was a universal harbour for Norwegians and merchants.

**2) From Norway to Iceland:**

From Cape Stad (the most westerly forland) to Horn (Iceland's south easterly forland in the vicinity of Papós) it takes seven days and nights sailing.

**3) From Iceland to Greenland's eastern settlement:**

a) The ancient course: From Snæfellsness, two days and two nights sailing straight to the west to Gunbiörns skerries, midway between Greenland and Iceland (i.e. one had traversed half the way to the eastern settlement. Gunbiörns skerries most likely lay in the present Angmagssalik on Greenland's east coast beneath 66° N lat.) b) The later course, after ice having come «out of the sea bays» so near to the skerries, that no one could sail the ancient direction without danger of life: From Snæfellsness straight to the west for one day and one night, just slightly to south west so as to escape the above mentioned ice, which lies near Gunbiörns skerries, and then on for one day and one night to the north west, then one comes in under Hvarf. From Snæfellsness, the shortest way to Greenland is «four days sailing» (Landnåma).

**4) From Iceland to the more northerly part of Greenland's east coast:**

There are four days sea between Langaness on Iceland's north coast and Svalbard northwards in the sea bay (it is said in another place 2 days).

**5) From Iceland to Ireland:**

From Reykjavik to Jolduhlaup, 5 (3) days and nights on the sea.









Greenland's south-west coast with the ancient icelandic settlements.









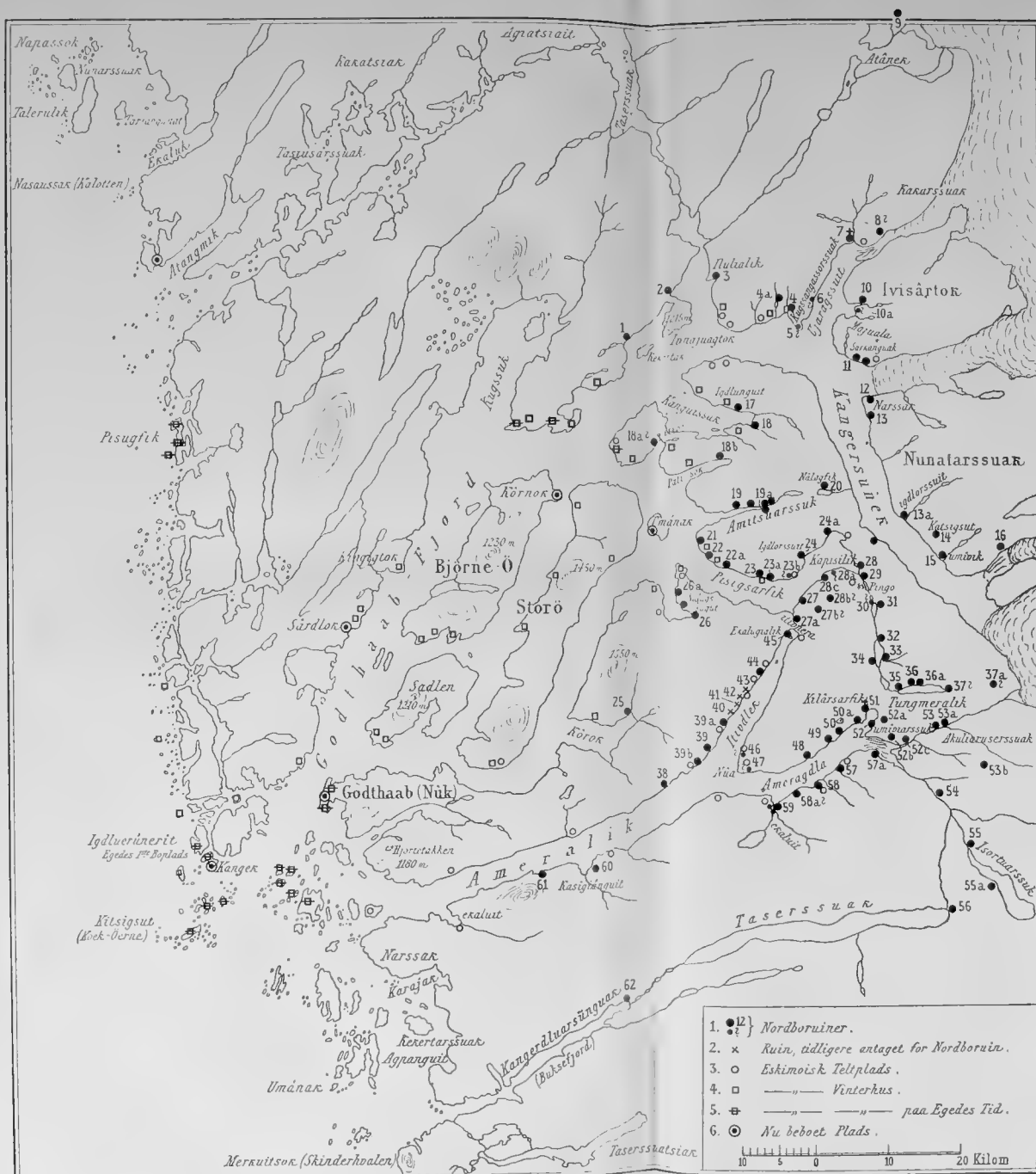












The chief part of the western settlement.

1. Norseruiner.
2. A ruin formerly supposed to be a Norseruiner.
3. An Eskimoic tent-place.

4. An Eskimoic winter-house.
5. An Eskimoic winter-house at the time of Hans Egede.
6. A place inhabited at the present time.





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